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ABSTRACT

Concerned with the interaction between teacher writing values and classroom writing instruction, this report describes a naturalistic study of writing-related activities and teacher attitudes in a combined second and third grade classroom and a sixth grade classroom. It presents descriptions and analyses of seven occasions for writing that illustrate how teacher planning, prior experiences, conceptions of writing as a process, and beliefs about student abilities were reflected in the teaching of writing. The report also suggests the varied writing functions evident in different writing occasions: writing to know oneself and others, writing to occupy free time, writing to participate in the community, and writing to demonstrate academic achievement. It identifies a number of issues as important challenges to writing instruction, including (1) developing a sense of audience, (2) using models, (3) instilling a sense of purpose in writing occasions, (4) setting expectations for writing performance, (5) evaluating students' writing, and (6) recognizing the classroom context as an influence on writing. The report closes with a discussion of the study's implications for teaching, curriculum development, and future research. Extensive appendixes include a list of articles and workshops arising from the research, the videotape viewing session format, and samples of field notes, interview notes, teacher journal entries, and a videotape log. (MM)

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Research Series No. 104

UNDERSTANDING WRITING IN SCHOOL: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF WRITING AND ITS INSTRUCTION IN TWO CLASSROOMS

Christopher M. Clark and Susan Florio
with
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Abstract

During 1979-81 a naturalistic study of schooling and the acquisition of written literacy was conducted in two classrooms, a combined second/third grade and a sixth grade. The four teachers involved in the study (two focal teachers and their teammates) were active throughout the project as research collaborators who helped to shape the inquiry and to give direction to the data interpretation. This report presents descriptions and analyses of seven occasions for writing that illustrate how the teachers' planning, prior experiences, conceptions of writing as a process, and beliefs about their students' abilities were reflected in their teaching of writing. The occasions for writing also illustrate the multiple functions that writing served in these classrooms: writing to know oneself and others, writing to occupy free time, writing to participate in community, and writing to demonstrate academic achievement. Issues identified as important contributors to the challenge of teaching writing in school include audience, the use of models, the need for a sense of purpose in writing occasions, the setting of expectations for writing performance, evaluation of students' written work, and the classroom context as an influence on writing. The report closes with a discussion of implications of the study for teaching, curriculum, and further research.

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UNDERSTANDING WRITING IN SCHOOL: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF WRITING AND ITS INSTRUCTION IN TWO CLASSROOMS

Christopher M. Clark and Susan Florio[1]

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[1] Christopher M. Clark is an associate professor of educational psychology. Susan Florio is an associate professor of teacher education. Together, Clark and Florio coordinated the Written Literacy Project, on which this report is based, and they will coordinate the follow-up project, a Written Literacy Forum. Their names are listed alphabetically here. Both contributed equally to the project and this report.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Written literacy is an acknowledged and valued outcome of schooling in our society, yet it has been lamented that writing is the most neglected expressive mode in both research and teaching. The social and cognitive complexities of writing make it a difficult activity to study. But writing instruction continues to be a thorny responsibility of teachers, and the economic and social futures of children rest in part on their mastery of some set of writing skills. For these reasons, it is fitting that teachers and researchers with diverse skills and interests invest energy and creativity in the study of writing in schools.

The Safety Posters: An Occasion for Writing

Before presenting the details of the study, the following story of an occasion for writing is offered. The story is offered to give the reader a feeling for the kinds of data and analytic approaches used in this study and also to show the following:

1. that writing arises in classrooms that are open to its possibilities;
2. that it helps to know about teacher plans, intentions, and beliefs to make sense of the writing that is observed in classrooms; and

3. that occasions for writing in classrooms are negotiated and multi-faceted.

The following paragraph is an excerpt from notes taken during an interview of Ms. Donovan,[2] the teacher of a combined second/third grade, on Monday, September 17, 1979, the eighth school day of the year:

> In our interview, Ms. Donovan described how she used an unexpected traffic safety assembly as an opportunity to do a writing exercise. The assembly included a film on bicycle and pedestrian safety and a talk on the same subject. After Ms. Donovan and her students returned to Room 12, she asked them to recall some of the safety rules that they had just heard about. Ms. Donovan said that she was very surprised at the terrific difficulty that the children had in remembering the safety rules. At first, they could remember only the general topic of the assembly. With some coaching and reminding, several of the rules were recalled. Then Ms. Donovan asked the students each to choose one safety rule and draw a picture illustrating the rule. These poster-size pictures, with the safety rules as captions, will be posted in the hallways as a service and a reminder to the other students in the school. (Interview Notes, 9/17/79)

The Safety Posters Activity is an early and telling example of occasions for writing in this primary grade classroom. It began with the unexpected: a school-wide assembly that Ms. Donovan learned of only upon arrival at school Monday morning. What began as an unexpected interruption of the school day grew into an elaborate series of learning experiences that extended over several days, and, to some degree, involved children and adults throughout the entire school. What happened and how did it come about? To answer this question, it is useful to "unpack" the above paragraph from the interview notes of September 17:

---

[2] The names of the teachers, children, schools, and school district used in this report are pseudonyms.

> *In our interview, Ms. Donovan described how she used an unexpected traffic safety assembly as an opportunity to do a writing exercise.*

Commentary: This assembly was a school-wide event presented in the gym by two uniformed young women employed by the local police department. The young women were known by some of the children as their summer jobs had involved monitoring bicycle safety. The assembly is a clear example of formal contact between the larger community and the school population. Bicycle and pedestrian safety are topics that are very relevant to elementary school children, and responsibility for the safety of school children is shared by school personnel, parents, public safety officers, and the community at large. Safety is a fundamental issue, and, in this case, a safety assembly took priority over classroom and academic issues. The fact that the assembly was unexpected, yet easily incorporated into the morning was, in part, a function of the flexibility of the early weeks of school, when the daily and weekly schedules are not yet fully developed into relatively fixed routines. Ms. Donovan learned about the safety assembly before the children arrived and included it as the first entry on the daily schedule written on the chalkboard (Field Notes, 9/17/79):

> On the board, Ms. Donovan has written the "plans for today." The safety assembly is included and starred as a special occasion. The plans are as follows:

Today is Sept. 17, 1979

9:20--10:05
Assembly*

10:05--10:30
Gym

10:30--11:00
Reading

11:00--11:15
Recess

11:15--11:30
USR

11:30--12:15
Language Arts

12:15--12:50
Lunch

12:55--1:15
Centers

1:15--1:55
Math

1:55--2:10
Recess

2:15--2:45
Science (2)
Soc. St. (3)

2:45--3:00
Clean up

3:00--3:10
Diaries

The assembly included a film on bicycle and pedestrian safety and a talk on the same subject.

Commentary: The 9/17/79 field notes describe the assembly as follows: "the young women talked about and showed several film strips about safety in walking or bicycling to school." The field worker who attended the assembly also remembered that this was the first school-wide assembly of the year, that some students were loud and disorderly and were brought back to order by the school principal, and that the safety presentation was not smooth and spellbinding. One of the filmstrips actually burned up as it was being projected. In short, this assembly had as much to do with learning how to behave at an assembly as it did with safety rules.

It was during the assembly that Ms. Donovan had the idea of using this experience as the basis for a writing activity later in the morning. While the data do not reveal what triggered the idea, earlier interviews and observations suggest that Ms. Donovan was predisposed to make the most of the unexpected. She valued writing and believed that school writing activities must have a clear purpose if they are to be successful. On the second day of school, Ms.

Donovan and her students did another writing activity that began with the common experience of a film. She describes this activity in her journal entry of September 9:

> I was pleased with Friday's writing lesson. Motivation was movie on word families, then students wrote and illustrated sentences utilizing a word family (e.g., Jim Rice slid on ice and landed in lice.) This type of open-ended lesson seems to be the most effective. Children with differing abilities can be as simplistic or sophisticated [as they want to] depending upon their creativity. Instruction is to the group, but the results are individualized without isolation from the total group. (Teacher Journal, 9/9/79)

As will become apparent as the Safety Posters Activity unfolds, the structure of this occasion for writing includes an initial shared experience (the safety assembly), a clear purpose and audience, and the kind of open-ended opportunity for children to produce something that reflects their ability, creativity, and sophistication. The most advanced students are not held back, and the least advanced students can still achieve a measure of success. In short, the safety assembly probably triggered the plan for the Safety Posters Activity because the assembly fit Ms. Donovan's pattern or set of criteria for a good writing activity. It seems that this "spontaneous planning" that Ms. Donovan engaged in is more frequently seen in curriculum areas like language arts, where there are few published series or kits, than in subjects like math, reading, and science, which are largely structured by published materials.

> *After Ms. Donovan and her students returned to Room 12, she asked them to recall the safety rules that they had just heard about. Ms. Donovan said that she was very surprised at the terrific difficulty that the children had in remembering the safety rules.*

Commentary: Again, the field notes give a clearer picture of what actually happened on that Monday morning. Ms. Donovan's students stayed in the gym after the safety assembly for physical education (10:05 -10:30 a.m.). When the children returned to Room 12, they worked on reading worksheets, went to recess, then did 15 minutes of silent reading. It was not until 11:35 a.m. (language arts time) that the children were asked to recall the safety rules taught in the assembly. Given so many interpolated activities, that the assembly itself was full of interruptions and distractions, and that the children did not know in advance that they would be expected to remember the specific wording of the safety rules, it is not surprising that they had difficulty. The safety assembly was an experience removed in time and space from the classroom. The children had no props or memory aids to stimulate their recall.

> *At first, they could remember only the general topic of the assembly. With some coaching and reminding, several of the rules were recalled.*

Commentary: In attempting to bring her plan into action, Ms. Donovan had to take on the roles of "class memory" and "memory coach." She had assumed that the safety assembly experience would be sufficiently recent and vivid to serve as the common experience basis for the language arts activity. When Ms. Donovan discovered (to her surprise) that the children did not remember the specific safety rules, she changed her plan on the spot. The teacher's task now became to recreate the common experience in a form, place, and time such that all the students had it available to them for use in the next part of the activity. The field notes (9/17/79, p. 3) show how this was done:

> As part of language arts, Ms. Donovan asks students to "re-run" this morning's safety program and recall what they learned. On a piece of large white paper up front, Ms. Donovan prints what they recall. The format is that an individual raises her/his hand. Ms. Donovan writes down what (s)he says. Another student is asked to read it back.
>
> Ms. Donovan writes down what students say in multicolor magic markers:
>
> 1. Don't run on the street without looking.
> 2. Don't take shortcuts you don't know.
> 3. Don't cross the street when the light is red.
> 4. When you ride your bike, keep your hands on the handlebars.*
>
> *This formulation arrived at after several revisions. Ms. Donovan has said, "Take your time and re-state it, how you want to say it." In coming up with this one, students chime in with alternatives; Ms. Donovan asks them to let her restate it.
>
> (This activity resembles others that have been observed so far. It is the generation of general information posters by the whole group with Ms. Donovan acting as scribe.)
>
> In coming up with sentences, Ms. Donovan says, "Sometimes does it take a couple of times to get out what you want to say? That's OK." The person who offers the original idea has the final say as to how it is written down. (Field Notes, 9/17/79, p. 3)

This process continues until 10 safety rules are recorded. Notice that Ms. Donovan goes to some length to see that every student has a chance to be actively involved in the rule generation part of this process. Oral editing, friendly amendments, and reading aloud are all used to produce a document that every child has had a hand in and understands. Mechanics such as spelling and penmanship are taken care of by the teacher acting as scribe. The use of a rough draft is foreshadowed by Ms. Donovan's statement that "Sometimes does it take a couple of minutes to get out what you want to say? That's

OK." In short, this part of the Safety Posters Activity constitutes a collective and largely oral preparation for writing that makes visible how the solitary, silent author could prepare to write (and is an activity in which even kids who have "forgotten how to write" can compose).

> *Then Ms. Donovan asked the students to each choose one safety rule and draw a picture illustrating the rule. These poster-size pictures, with the safety rules as captions, will be posted in the hallways as a service and a reminder to the other students in the school.*

Commentary: This was the point at which the full plan was first communicated to the children, that is, the part of the plan that had to do with transforming what the students knew into graphic form. The students were given a choice, within a clear and limited set of alternatives, and this element of student choice seems to have been an important part of Ms. Donovan's beliefs about effective learning activities, particularly in writing. The combination of drawing and writing is also a striking aspect of this task, as illustrated in Figure 1. Other researchers have commented on the close and mutually supportive relationship between drawing and writing, especially in the early grades (e.g., Graves, 1978; Ervin-Tripp & Mitchell-Kernan, 1977; Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz, 1978; Clay, 1975). The field notes give a vivid and more complete portrayal of the writing/drawing phase of the Safety Posters Activity:

> Next Ms. Donovan asks students to think of ways to help remind the rest of the school of these rules. The students suggest the following:
>
> "take them around"
> "put them up on the hallway*
> "tell them not to do it"

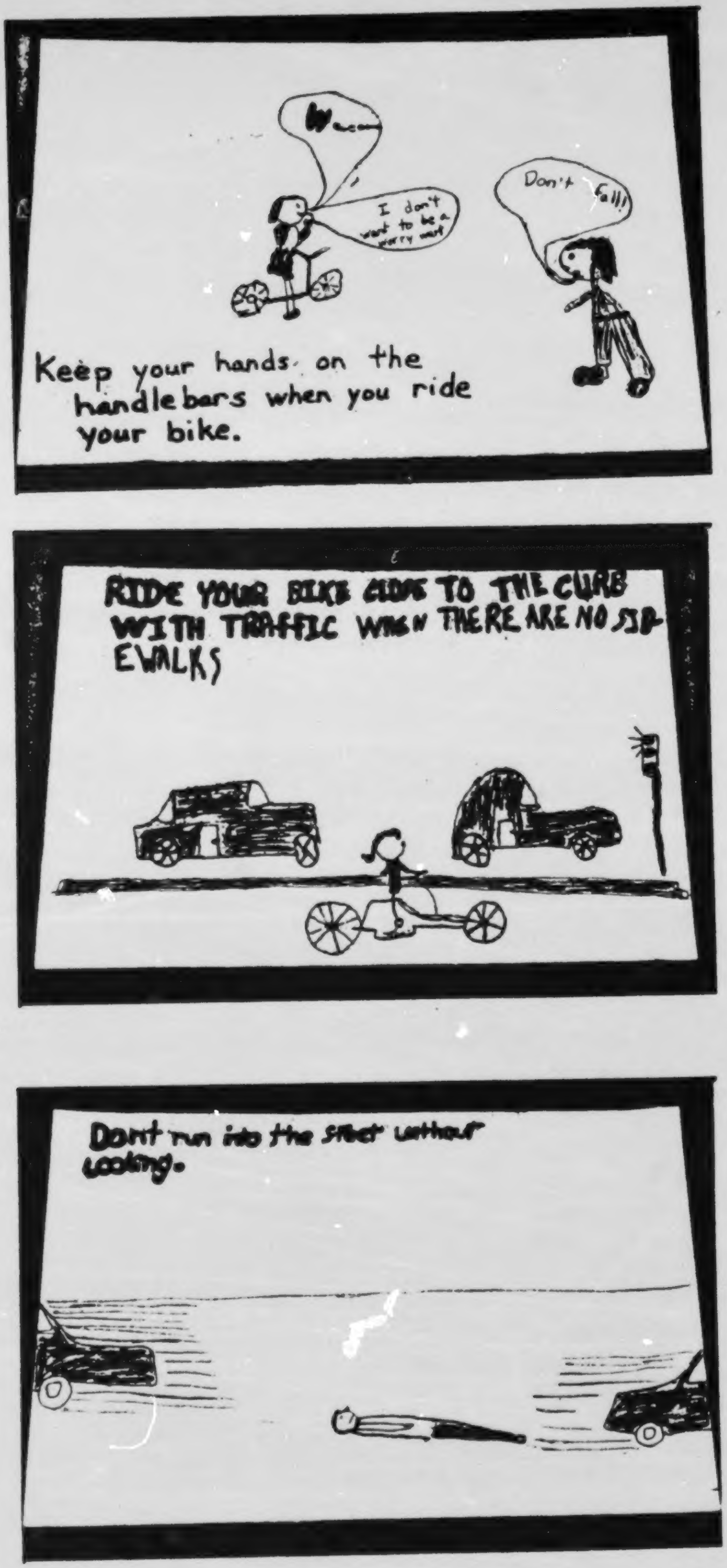
Waa
I don't want to be a worry wart
Don't fall!
Keep your hands on the handlebars when you ride your bike.
RIDE YOUR BIKE CLOSE TO THE CURB WITH TRAFFIC WHEN THERE ARE NO SIDEWALKS
Don't run into the street without looking.

Figure 1. Sample safety posters.

> *This is response to Ms. Donovan's question: "How could each one of you help remind them of one rule?
>
> (It is interesting to note that, in response to the charge, the students do not generate any means that are specifically writing-related. They do, however, offer symbolic alternatives that are largely visual.)
>
> After the students make their suggestions, Ms. Donovan says, "I had an idea, too. Each (person) could make a poster with one rule and put is in the hallway."
>
> The students say, "Yeah!"
> Ms. Donovan: "Do a picture and write the rule on the bottom."
>
> Before getting started, an additional rule is generated:
>
> 11. Don't ride a bike too big for you.
>
> At 11:50, as students go to their seats to start, Ms. Donovan says, "At the end I'll write the rule for you or you can write it yourself in marker. The picture has to be done in crayon."
>
> The students sit quietly at first. Overheard is the following exchange:
>
> Student: "What are you going to do?"
> Student: "I don't know; I'm still thinking."
>
> Some students prefer to write the rule first; others make pictures first. Several students found the task difficult for several reasons, e.g., they did not want to do a rule that they found out a lot of other students were doing; they couldn't draw what they needed to illustrate the rule (such as a bicycle). The upshot of these difficulties was that by the end of the available time, some students were completely finished while others were just getting started. (Field Notes, 9/17/79, pp. 4-5)

Notice that both the purpose of the posters and the audience for the posters are specified before crayon touches paper. The students were guided by their teacher to participate in "coming up with the idea" of drawing safety posters. All of the necessary elements were now in place: the list of rules on "experience paper," crayons, poster paper, an opportunity for choice and originality, a sense of shared ownership of the project, and the dual motivation of having one's work displayed in the hallway (a place of honor) and of doing good (perhaps even saving a life) by reminding other schoolmates of the safety rules. Ms. Donovan took a further step to minimize threat by offering to write the rule herself on the bottom of the posters of those students who wanted or needed that help.

The time allowed for drawing and safety rule writing was about 45 minutes (11:30 - 12:15). As the field notes indicate, there were wide individual differences in task completion. This is an issue that Ms. Donovan returns to again and again during the course of the year. For example, the issue was first raised in the September 17 interview:

> In discussing planning and diagnostic testing, Ms. Donovan raised a perennial problem for teachers: how to deal with the relatively large differences in the speed at which children work when they are working independently. "What should I do with the kids who finish fast? When I give them fun and extension activities to do I feel that the children who finish more slowly are being gypped. I like closure--everyone must finish. I don't want the slower kids to get farther and farther behind."
>
> (It is interesting to note that this problem of individual differences in working speed has shown up so early in the year. We should take care to note the ways in which Ms. Donovan deals with this issue as she tries to resolve an apparent conflict between her personal philosophy and value on equal opportunity and the practical realities of a mixed ability class. She seems to recognize that faster is not always better. This might be especially true in writing.) (Interview Notes, 9/17/79)

Epilogue: The Safety Posters Activity continued to develop, as though it had a life of its own. By Wednesday, September 19 (two days after the safety assembly) all of the posters were finished. That day, in a conversation at lunch with the kindergarten teacher, Ms. Donovan had the idea that her students should make small group presentations of their posters to the kindergarten children as a prelude to displaying the posters in the school hallways. Arrangements were made to do this on Thursday, September 20. During the morning and afternoon that day, groups of three or four of Ms. Donovan's students were sent to the kindergarten room to show their posters and teach the younger children the safety rules. The field notes for September 20 and 21 show how this process developed:

> (9/20/79, p. 1): At 9:20, students gather in the center. Ms. Donovan says, "The kindergarteners are just learning to get along together." This comment is prelude to her sending several students to kindergarten to hang posters and tell about them. (Yesterday at lunch, Ms. Donovan negotiated the time and purpose of the safety poster sharing with Mr. Brown, the kindergarten teacher.)
>
> (9/20/79, p. 1): Dani returns from the kindergarten and says that she was scared to read her poster to the children. She says that, "the kids didn't even listen," but that she read it and showed them her drawing anyway.
>
> (9/20/79, p. 3): [At about 11:00] Before the students left for pictures, they began to talk about their experiences of sharing the safety posters with the kindergarten earlier this morning. Some said they found it "embarrassing" and "scary." Some students said they thought it might have helped to practice beforehand. They agree that students who will go this afternoon should practice first. Ms. Donovan tells the other students to help them practice by asking questions "that you think the first graders would ask." As a few students stand up to do it, their peers applaud their efforts.
>
> (9/20/79, p. 4): At 12:55 the students reconvene in the center. Ms. Donovan, who has had a chance to talk to Mr. Brown (the kindergarten teacher) at lunch, says, "Mr. Brown said that you guys did a good job this morning, even if you were nervous."

> Then five students leave with their posters to talk to Mr. Brown's afternoon class, saying they are nervous. (Lea has a stomach ache.)
>
> (9/21/79, p. 3): At 12:55, after lunch, the students gather in the center. Afternoon roll is taken and one of the students reads the "afternoon plans." Three students leave for the kindergarten with their safety posters. Ms. Donovan asks them, "Do you know what yours says?" She has them read back what's written on the posters before leaving.
>
> (9/21/79, p. 3): At 1:05, students return from kindergarten.
>
> Ms. Donovan: "How'd it go?"
> Student: "Terrific."
> Student: "Not very many questions, though."

Oral presentation of the safety posters to the kindergarten children added a number of things to the Safety Posters Activity. The second and third grade authors' sense of audience was undoubtedly heightened. They saw very clearly that it was useful to re-examine, edit, and rehearse what they had written if an audience is expected to understand their messages. They learned that writing and drawing can be used to focus oral communication (in this case, teaching), and that a graphic product can serve the author as a reminder and illustration of his or her teaching. Ms. Donovan's students also learned from one another's experience and served as a constructively critical audience for the dress rehearsals. And finally, this phase of the project served as a meaningful connection between two groups of children within the school, showing on a small scale how writing can contribute to the building of a social system when members are separated in space and time.

This has been a lengthy description and analysis of the Safety Posters Activity, one of dozens of occasions for writing that took place in the two classrooms under study during a full school year. The analysis of and commentary on the Safety Posters Activity have raised a number of issues about how, why, and under what circumstances written literacy is acquired in schools, and what roles the teacher and students play in this process. Like many other occasions for writing noted in the earliest weeks of school, the Safety Posters Activity began with a shared experience not originally planned by Ms. Donovan. Also, like many other early writing occasions, this one had importance in both the school and non-school lives of the students. It was an expressive enterprise that moved the students beyond the boundaries of Room 12. Ms. Donovan seized the opportunity to turn an unexpected event into an occasion for writing. Her engagement of students in a series of related expressive activities, both written and oral, involved her in a special sort of pedagogical role. Ms. Donovan extended her planning and teaching beyond the bounds of prepared instructional materials and district mandates for the language arts. She created writing curriculum with her students as the class jointly produced a situation that would both support the practice of writing and be supported by that writing. Ms. Donovan and her students participated in an extended communicative enterprise that involved the practice of written literacy as they prepared and shared documents they called "The Safety Posters." Before returning to these and other issues illuminated by occasions for writing in schools, the rationale, purposes, research questions, and methods of the inquiry will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING WRITING AND ITS INSTRUCTION IN THE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

Frustration with past efforts marks the current state of research on writing in fields as diverse as psychology, anthropology, and educational research. In psychology, for example, difficulties have been encountered in attempting to test the relation between writing and mental abilities in societies lacking formal schooling. This has prompted a call for research on the acquisition of written literacy to focus not on the incremental development of a set of generalizable mental capacities, but on literacy as a repertoire of context-related expressive behaviors to a large extent imparted and acquired by means of cultural membership (e.g., Scribner & Cole, 1978).

Similarly, in anthropology, years of modest interest in writing as merely an index of cultural development and as a symbol system divorced from daily expressive activity in a culture has given way to a call for an "ethnography of writing"--a study of writing and its meanings as part of the "total communicative economy of the society under study" (Basso, 1977, p. 432). This research focus is particularly appropriate as anthropology is increasingly applied to questions of educational equity and cultural difference in our own society.

Finally, in educational research, contemporary studies of classroom organization and teacher decision-making highlight the classroom as a special place that both constitutes a small community in its own right and is linked in important ways to the larger socio-cultural milieu. The classroom community is special because it is one in which one individual is empowered to think and plan self-consciously for the structuring of many interactional activities that take place within it. This structuring is thought to be important in light of the community's valuing of growth and beneficial change over time for each individual member. Such insights derived from naturalistic study of classroom life have fueled interest in the investigation of writing in school not as the "outcome" of teaching behavior per se, but as an integral activity in the establishment and maintenance of the classroom as a learning community and as one measure of that community's power as a socializing force (Florio, 1979; Clark & Yinger, Note 1).

Thus the interests of psychologists, anthropologists, and educators have converged on questions of writing in use--on its expressive functions, on the ways in which literacy is acquired in the course of social life, and on the range of cognitive skills that ought to be considered when documenting or planning for instruction in writing. Questions about the acquisition of skilled performance and its relation to social context lend themselves particularly well to investigation by naturalistic means. One of the best ways to learn about writing is to watch people navigating their daily lives, noting occasions in which writing is the chosen mode of expression, listening to the language people have about writing, considering the nature of the writings they produce, and observing the ways in which writing works for people as functional communication. This strategy seems useful not only to the ethnographer hoping to locate writing meaningfully in her/his portrayal of a society or to the psychologist observing the repertoire of skilled performances in a group of literate but unschooled people, but also to practitioners interested in the current state of the art in the teaching of writing and seeking ways to support and nurture the process of becoming literate.

Literacy and Community

When researchers investigate the acquisition of written literacy by children both in and out of school, they are asking fundamental questions about the individual psychological development of those children and about their membership in a community. Although children acquire many skills as a part of development, writing is one skilled performance that epitomizes the profound connections between personal development and the development of the community. The learning of systems of signs and symbols in speaking, reading and writing is a stunning example of the interconnection between the growth of the individual and that of the society. In this spirit, Vygotsky (1978) cites writing as a

> particular system of symbols and signs whose mastery heralds a critical turning point in the entire cultural development of the child. (p. 106)

Not only does writing, like speaking, provide entrée into community for the individual, but community is, in fact, able to exist to the extent that people can share their thoughts and feelings by means of communicative symbols. In this regard, Joseph Schwab (1975) asserts in the essay Learning Community that

> our beginning personness, as children, consists first of a world of perceived and felt significances that we have made from things seen. It is when another--adult or child--signals recognition that we have such a world, seeks to know it, and tries to give us a glimpse of this private world, that one-to-one community begins. This is done in one and only one way--through speech, by talk. (pp. 31-32)

Speech and writing are both instances of the use of cultural tools--they are systems created and passed on in societies in order for the members of those societies to live and work meaningfully together (Cole & Scribner, 1978, p. 7).

The problem with studying the acquisition of any such communicative system in a society is that, for the most part, the process happens gradually, informally, and without much explicit instruction. This phenomenon has been documented in speech where, according to Cook-Gumperz (1975), "the appearance of competence in daily life is given more by the activities that are not singled out for attention by the actors" (p. 138) than by those activities that are singled out. The process of acquisition of literacy even in school where such acquisition is an explicit and valued aim is equally opaque. Although educators can develop curricula and organize classroom activities around the practice of reading or writing, they are, finally, not able to render a full account of the process of becoming a reader or becoming a writer simply by listing requisite skills to be acquired (cf. Wittgenstein, 1953/1968, I, pp. 155-182). Evidence of this problem is the great difficulty with which educators make decisions about how to assess student performance in such areas as expressive writing or the appreciation of literature (Elmore, Note 2).

In the pilot research in the classroom that preceeded the study reported here, we observed that the acquisition of written literacy in one second-grade classroom resembled the acquisition of speech in some important ways. It is well-known that as children acquire a first language they are welcomed into the family as communicators even before their first words are uttered. Early on, children find that moves and sounds are expressive in that they elicit action from other people. Children in effect practice the use of language not as preparation for social life, but as social life itself. In that process, grammatical skills are seldom taught directly to children by the adults who are expert in their use. Rather, by means of the practice that comes from use, children gradually approximate the matured forms of speech in stages that appear to be developmental (see, for example, Cazden, 1972; Brown, 1973). Similarly, in the classroom previously studied, children did not receive much direct instruction in the process of writing unless or until there was a breach in the normal order of things. Considerable practice of writing and gradual approximation of the matured forms was observed, but only occasional remediation (Florio, 1979). If all went well, the process of becoming a writer, although a remarkable one in the life of the child, went unremarked in the classroom. We observed the developing writer coming, in Garfinkel's (1975) words, "to know a world in common with others and in common with others to be taken for granted" (p. 139).

In attempting to account for these classroom observations, the researcher can assume with Goody, Cole, and Scribner (1977) that the occasion for mastery of written symbols, like the occasion for mastery of speech, arises in the course of social life and is supported by the community in which it occurs. People begin to write because within their communities they need to be able to perform the operations that literacy makes possible. They need to engage in commerce or to keep records, they need to remind themselves of the thoughts they have had (Brooks, Note 3). Again, in pilot work it was found that children in one second grade classroom in which a small community was created in microcosm during the course of the school year wrote in the greatest volume and complexity when working on the correspondence and record keeping required to maintain their classroom town. All other writing of worksheets, test papers, compositions, and the like was considered to be merely work "for school" (Florio, 1979; Florio & Frank, in press).

Like so many other forms of tacit cultural knowledge, writing, its uses, and the process of its acquisition are difficult for participants fully to describe or reflect upon. Rather, considerable insight into the writing process can be gained, in Basso's (1977) words, by "investigating the activity of writing as a dynamic component in the conduct and organization of social relations" (p. 431). The insight that mastery of communicative systems arises in the midst of social life is not a new one. In language arts, the point of view has been argued, for example, by Moffett (1968). We see evidence of this point of view in the writings of Dewey (1956), Friere (Note 4), and Bettelheim (1967) as well. The implications of this insight for research and practice are straightforward. In coming to understand individual development, it is necessary to consider that development in the context of community. Educators need to know more about such development, not because it would fail to arise without direct instruction and schooling, but because, in schools, they have a potential opportunity to enhance the process. Furthermore, in schools many children from diverse communities come to be taught and evaluated by us. Educators are responsible to approach the individual stylistic preferences in communication arising from the differences in community membership with understanding and respect (Philips, 1972; Shultz, Florio, & Erickson, in press).

Teacher Thought and Action

In addition to the assumption that the acquisition of written literacy in schools serves multiple social and communicative functions, the present inquiry was also informed by a model of the teacher as a rational agent who takes an influential and proactive role in planning, initiating, maintaining, and integrating classroom interaction in general and occasions for writing in particular. This view of the teacher derives from the cognitive information processing approach to research on teaching (Shulman & Elstein, 1975; Clark, Note 5). From this perspective, the teacher is seen as bringing his or her thoughts into action through the information processing sequence depicted in Figure 2.

The left-most section of Figure 2 represents the professional memory of a teacher, which includes a teacher's implicit theories

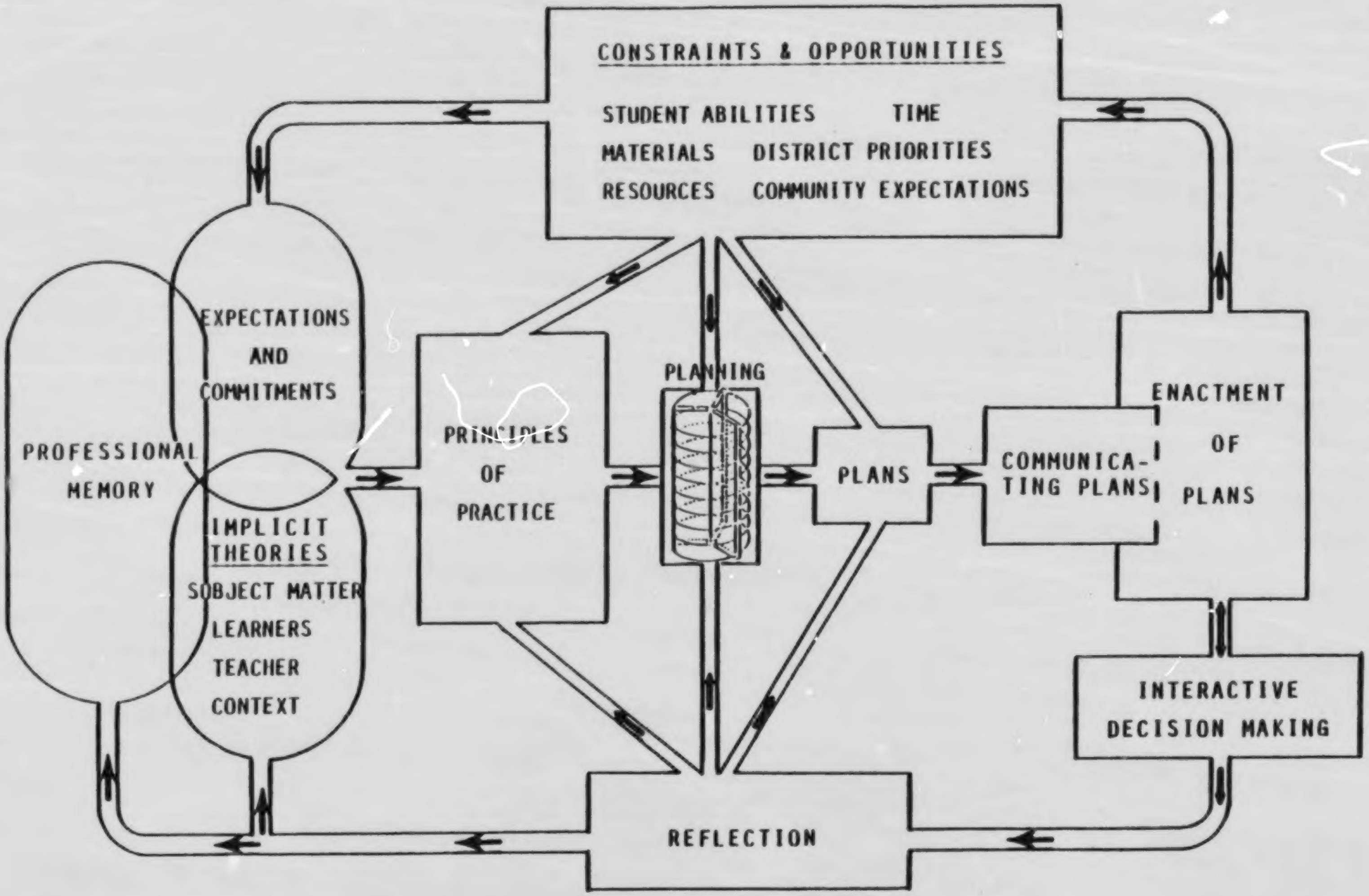
CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES
STUDENT ABILITIES
TIME
MATERIALS
DISTRICT PRIORITIES
RESOURCES
COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS
EXPECTATIONS AND COMMITMENTS
PROFESSIONAL MEMORY
IMPLICIT THEORIES
SUBJECT MATTER
LEARNERS
TEACHER
CONTEXT
PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE
PLANNING
PLANS
COMMUNICATING PLANS
ENACTMENT OF PLANS
INTERACTIVE DECISION MAKING
REFLECTION

Figure 2. A model of teacher thought and action.

about the commonplaces of education (subject matter, learner, teacher, and context) and his or her expectations and commitments concerning the particular class and task of interest. In this model, the teacher's implicit theories about each of the commonplaces of education interact with his or her hopes, expectations, and commitments for writing instruction at a particular time to produce and rationalize a set of principles of practice. These principles of practice may be explicit or implicit. Taken together, they constitute a teacher's set of criteria for effective writing instruction. That is, if a teacher can be faithful to the set of principles of practice, he or she has every reason to believe that the teaching of writing will succeed. Particular successes and failures are explained largely in terms of maintenance of or violation of these principles of practice. It has been argued elsewhere (Clark & Yinger, Note 6) that the essence of what is professional about teaching is the translation of principles of practice into action.

Teacher planning, the next step in Figure 2, is the process of combining constraints and opportunities with principles of practice to produce a plan for action. The plan consists of particular writing activities that have been created, adopted or modified to be consistent with a teacher's principles of practice and, at the same time, practical within the limits of constraints and opportunities as the teacher sees them.

Next the teacher communicates the plan to his or her students and they jointly enact the plan. This is the most visible part of teaching--what one can see during a visit to a classroom in full operation. All that has gone before, and that follows, constitute the "hidden world of teaching" (Clark & Yinger, Note 6). Almost inevitably, there is a difference between a plan and the enactment of that plan. Classrooms are characterized by interruption and unpredictability. Spontaneity is often valued by teachers and students alike. And because writing activities are joint productions of teacher and students, a teacher's plan often serves mainly to get the process started, with full enactment a divergent process. Teacher interactive decision making guides this process of adapting instruction to fit the unpredictable constraints and inspirations of the moment.

As a writing activity is enacted, and afterward as well, the teacher and the students gain experience of several sorts and the teacher has an opportunity to evaluate and reflect upon these experiences. This set of processes is represented in the Reflection box in Figure 2. Reflection can lead to confirmation, explanation, explication, or change in any or all of the earlier-mentioned parts of the model. Thus, we have come full circle in this preliminary model of teacher thought and action in writing instruction.

Summary

There are important theoretical reasons why we have chosen to analyze both the functions that writing can be observed to perform in the classroom and teachers' implicit theories about writing in the same study. Previous research in both the ethnographic/sociolinguistic tradition and in the tradition of cognitive psychology have been incomplete and have left us with questions requiring the merging of perspectives. First, by documenting classroom interaction without attention to the intentionality of teacher (and students), little insight into the rationales for the observed social structuring can be gained. Classrooms are not like any other community. They exist for purposeful change in their members. They are organized by teachers whose responsibility it is to articulate the plans for activity and to structure the environments in which that activity occurs. However, to consider only the planning that underlies social life in the classroom is to miss both the spontaneity of the plans enacted and to encounter serious problems of interpreting the self-reports of teachers about their plans.

In an effort to increase understanding on the one hand of how teacher beliefs and values about writing (implicit or explicit) manifest themselves in the classroom and simultaneously to make better sense of those beliefs and values, research perspectives are combined in this study. The combination of a cognitive psychological approach to research on teaching with an ethnographic/sociolinguistic approach to the study of classroom life is a particularly powerful and appropriate way to achieve the stated research aims. Cognitive psychological research can explore the thoughts, intentions, and decisions of the teacher as s/he conceives, initiates, and maintains writing activities. Ethnographic and sociolinguistic description of the classroom as an environment for learning to write can illuminate the social organization of expressive activities.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

During 1979-80, a naturalistic study of schooling and the acquisition of written literacy was undertaken by the authors. The study had the following four purposes:

1. to document how two teachers and their respective students produce occasions for writing by means of interaction,
2. to describe the process of teacher planning for writing instruction as it relates to shaping these occasions for writing and overseeing the general evolution of the classroom as a community,
3. to develop a typology of the diverse occasions for writing extant in each classroom as they are construed by teachers and students, and
4. to examine these occasions as contexts for writing that may make differing cognitive and social demands on the students as writers and to document these differences.

Research Questions

The research was pursued in two schools in a mid-Michigan suburban community. Researchers recorded, described, and analyzed classroom activities and teacher planning as they relate to writing in one second/third grade classroom and one sixth grade classroom. The first 10 months of the study therefore consisted of extensive participant observation, interviewing, teacher journal keeping, sampling of student writing, and videotaping of occasions for writing in these classrooms. Data reduction and analysis were ongoing parts of this phase. The final nine months of the project were devoted to continuation of data analysis, writing of reports, and dissemination of findings to researchers and practitioners.

Figure 3 is a schematic overview of the process of inquiry in our study of writing and its instruction. The research was initiated with the following guiding questions about the nature of writing instruction and the process of becoming a writer within the formal setting of the school:

1. What is the nature of the process of acquisition of written literacy as it is realized in school?
2. How does the acquisition process work in classrooms?
3. What are the implications of this information for curriculum, instruction, and teacher education?

The initial questions were deliberately broad since pilot work suggested that it might be quite misleading a priori to decide where in school one might find writing taking place, which teaching behaviors might count as "writing instruction" in the classroom, or what kinds of graphic symbolizing on the part of children might function communicatively. Therefore, in framing initial questions and research design, the researchers heeded Malinowski's (1922/1961) warning to ethnographers that one who

> sets out to study only religion or only technology, or only social organization [or only writing instruction] cuts out an artificial field for inquiry, and he will be seriously handicapped in his work. (p. 11)

Thus, to understand the acquisition of written literacy in school, the particulars of classroom life and the thoughts and plans of teachers were broadly sampled at the outset. The aim was gradually to discover which among these pieces of data would best tell the

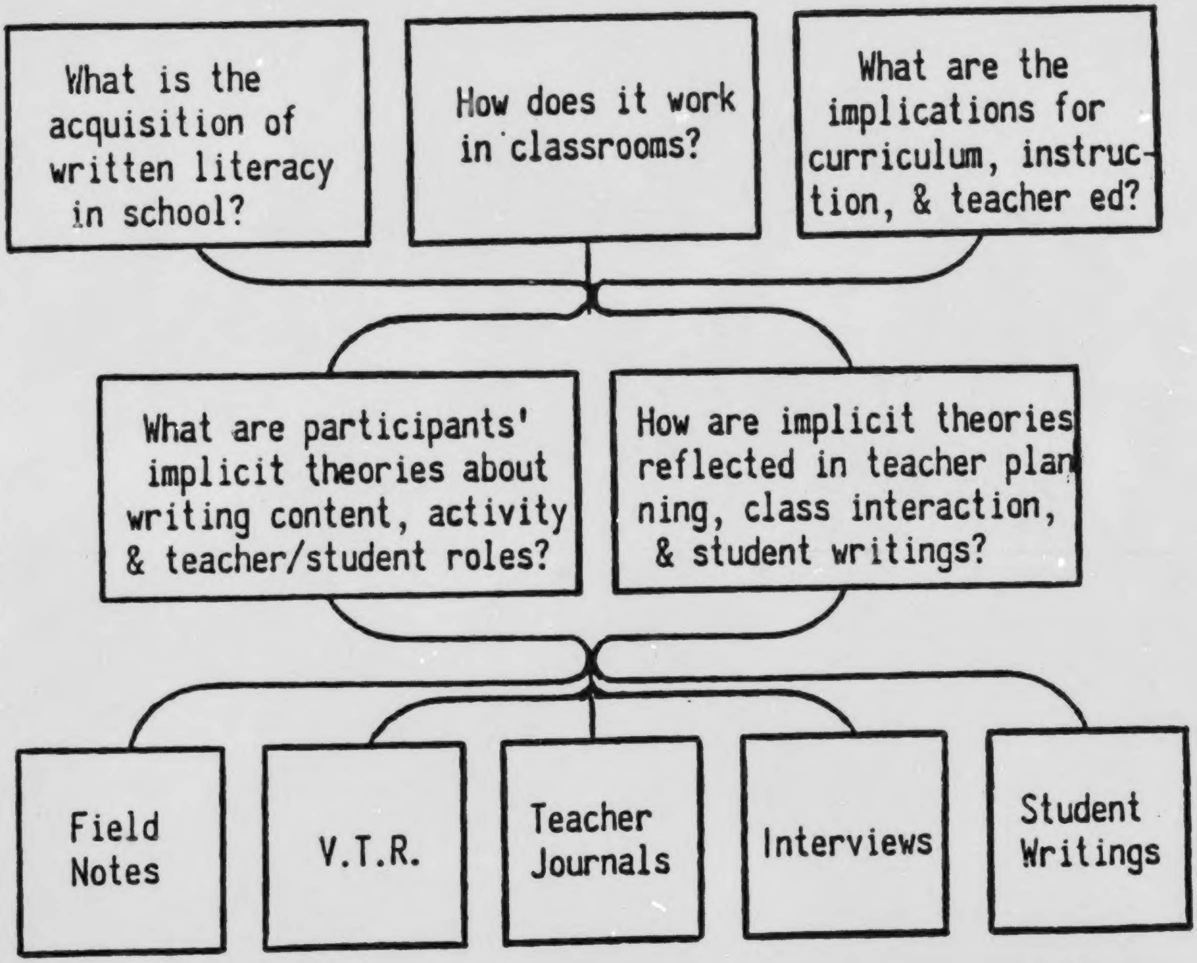
What is the acquisition of written literacy in school?
How does it work in classrooms?
What are the implications for curriculum, instruction, & teacher ed?
What are participants' implicit theories about writing content, activity & teacher/student roles?
How are implicit theories reflected in teacher planning, class interaction, & student writings?
Field Notes
V.T.R.
Teacher Journals
Interviews
Student Writings

Figure 3. Written Literacy Project research questions and data sources.

story of writing and its instruction in the terms of the teachers and children studied and in ways that would add to the body of knowledge about the process of writing and its instruction.

Obviously questions of such a broad nature are not directly answerable by means of naturalistic observation. Upon entering the field, the researcher is confronted not with answers, but with a flood of particular behaviors. Some behaviors are observed and not commented or reflected upon directly by teachers and children as they enact everyday life in school. Other behaviors are the descriptions and explanations that participants offer for classroom activity that can be elicited directly from them by means of interview or can be heard in their talk to one another about school life. The data collected in this study came from six sources and correspond to these two classes of behavior. They included the following:

1. field notes of classroom participant observation;
2. periodic videotapes of classroom activity,
3. viewing sessions in which focal teachers discussed and analyzed videotapes made in their classrooms,
4. interviews with both teachers and students about the writing done in their classrooms,
5. weekly journals kept by focal teachers recording their thoughts about the process of writing in their classrooms, and
6. naturalistically collected samples of student writing.

Pilot work in both the planning and enactment of writing instruction in classrooms and review of literature on written communication provided a set of potential middle range questions that were asked as the data began to accumulate. These questions concerned participants' implicit theories about writing--its content, the activities that motivate it, the roles played by teachers and students in its production. In addition, these questions concerned the ways in which such implicit theories might be reflected in teacher planning, classroom interaction, and student writing. The questions at this level were continuously evolving ones that were structured by and helped to structure subsequent data collection.

The theoretical orientations with which we began our study helped to determine our methods of data collection, reduction, and analysis. In general, our methods were descriptive. Using techniques such as participant observation, journal-keeping, interview, and collection of documents, we hoped to develop theoretically grounded descriptions of writing and its instruction in two classrooms. More will be said about our methods in the next section of this chapter.

Theoretical Assumptions and Working Hypotheses

A description of writing in two classrooms is the heart of this report. That description is intended to illuminate both occasions for writing in the classroom and the teacher beliefs and plans that help to shape them. It is important to recall that the description offered here has been derived by observing everyday life in two classrooms and by asking teachers to share, in the course of their regular efforts, their beliefs and plans about writing and its use.

Because no observation is unbiased, it is important to mention at the outset several kinds of information that contributed to the sense made of what was seen, read, and heard in the classrooms.

information about theoretical presuppositions, methodological decisions, and the frames for interpretation that were applied to the data should help the reader to locate the descriptions and analyses offered here in an intellectual context and should stimulate discussion and criticism of the findings.

Perhaps the key assumption of this research on written literacy is that writing is a form of social action, one way in which the members of a community transact across time and distance to accomplish social life and work. That assumption has implications for how one studies writing. For example, on the basis of that assumption, this study emphasized the process and use of writing in classrooms rather than the written products artifactual to that process in isolation. Important to the study of writing in use is the analyst's ability to document the social conditions out of which writing arises and the grounds on which participants select writing as the appropriate expressive alternative on any given occasion. To gain this kind of insight into social action and its meaning in the research reported here, additional assumptions and attendant methodological decisions were made. It was assumed, for example, that it would be crucial to understand the subjective point of view of the classroom participants. The hypotheses subsequently generated and tested, and the means of testing them, pertained to the nature of this point of view and its relation to the classroom events observed.

The study was further limited in significant ways in that it highlighted the teacher as purveyor and planner of the learning environment in which writing takes place. Clearly one could have elected to focus instead on the students as writers or on the functions of writing in other social contexts in children's lives. Selecting the teacher as the focus for study was deliberate and rooted in a concern that the research illuminate writing instruction as one of the important pedagogical responsibilities of teachers in our culture. It reflects a bias as well that the classroom is a significant place in the child's universe where writing is learned and used.

In order to understand the point of view of the teacher and its relation to writing as social action in the classroom, it is necessary to consider both what is observable in classroom behavior and what is inferrable about the mental life of the teacher. In Schutz' (1976) words,

> to understand human action we must not take the position of an outside observer who "sees" only the physical manifestation of these acts; rather we must develop categories for understanding what the actor--from his point of view--"means" in his actions (p. 139).

There are many ways to move beyond mere observation of phenomena to an understanding of their meanings to participants. Sometimes people can give words to the meanings they hold; sometimes they reveal their meaning systems in patterns of action. The design of this study contains the eclecticism and methodological pragmatism of fieldwork research in order to obtain and validate information about the meanings held by the teachers with respect to writing, its functions, and its pedagogy (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). Thus the researchers asked the teachers participating in the study to share in both writing and conversation "what they thought" about writing in their classrooms. In addition, by means of participant observation, the researchers lived some part of the teachers' lives with them. This primary experience of their world informed the researchers' questioning of them and aided in the interpretation of the self-reports of the teachers. Finally, the teachers were engaged directly in the deliberative process at monthly meetings where they joined the researchers in thinking from data by generating hypotheses and relating variables in meaningful ways in order to explain classroom observations. In short, the teachers joined the researchers in generating theory about practice.

The decision to undertake the study reported here was the result of pilot work by the principal investigators on writing instruction and review of research on writing extant in the fields of anthropology, psychology, and sociolinguistics. Thus the researchers did not enter the field without a conceptual orientation. Just as the initial questions of the study reflect that orientation (see Figure 3, p. 28), so early working hypotheses developed in initial stages of data collection reflect the study's theoretical orientation. They are set out here because they served not only to constrain what the researchers noticed out of the myriad of observable classroom behaviors, but also because they provided initial frames for interpretation of what was observed.

The researchers began data collection with the following limited working hypotheses:

1. There is an important relation between the acquisition of written literacy and membership in a community,

2. The classroom constitutes a community for learning in its own right and it is part of the wider community.

3. Many occasions for writing arise in a community. In the classroom, these occasions arise both as teachers and students develop a classroom community and as they transact with the wider community.

4. Across social occasions, writing serves a variety of expressive functions. Thus the cognitive and social demands of writing tasks may differ from occasion to occasion.

5. The teacher is chiefly responsible for conceiving, initiating, and maintaining writing occasions within the classroom community; but the enactment of those occasions and the writing produced therein are consequences of the interaction between teachers and students.

Despite these conceptual organizers, the complex nature of the research problem and the methods used to address it enabled the generation of many new hypotheses, not a priori, but in terms of and as a consequence of the life observed unfolding in the classrooms, interviews, and journals. Therefore, additional working hypotheses were generated that were grounded in observation and tested in short and long range ways against subsequent observation. As a result, the researchers tested and refined or rejected some initial hunches about writing instruction and learned many other things not dreamed of in the original research proposal. This report therefore reflects the influence of both the theoretical constructs antecedent to the research that constrain its focus and locate it in an intellectual tradition and the researchers' efforts to make disciplined sense of their own observations and the insights of their teacher informants.

Data Collection

Four methods were used to collect data about writing and its instruction in the two classrooms of interest:

1. participant observation, in which researchers spent extended periods of time in the classroom taking field notes and attempting to understand the classroom as a community for learning and the functions of writing within it;
2. elicitations of teacher thinking about writing in the classroom of four types:
    a. weekly journals in which the teachers recorded their plans for and reflections upon teaching in general and writing instruction in particular,
    b. weekly interviews in which each teacher discussed her journal entries with a researcher,
    c. monthly meetings in which the teachers and the research staff discussed patterns emerging in the data and other research-related issues,
    d. viewing sessions in which teachers viewed videotapes made occasionally in their rooms and discussed their content;
3. audiovisual recordings of naturally occurring classroom life, in which researchers attempted periodically to capture for later analysis and for discussion with the teachers those classroom interactions that appeared to be related to writing and its use; and
4. writing samples produced by both students and teachers in naturally occurring classroom activity that were used to illuminate and supplement analysis of classroom writing activities and teacher plans.

Data were collected throughout the entire 1979-80 school year. For purposes of both collection and preliminary analysis, the year was divided into four periods: September, October-December, January-March, and April-June. Previous classroom research indicated that this demarcation might be consistent with teachers' views of the functionally different parts of the school year (Clark & Yinger, Note 6; Shultz & Florio, 1979).

The intention of the study was to document writing and its instruction in two schools and classrooms--one a second/third-grade elementary school classroom and one a sixth grade middle school classroom. In each classroom there was a two-person team of teachers. One member of each team was the focal teacher informant for that class. For the bulk of observation and interview, therefore, these two teachers worked closely with the researchers. The other teammates in each room, however, quickly became interested and involved in the study and attended the monthly meetings and other project-related functions.

An initial interview with each focal teacher took place shortly before the beginning of the school year. This interview provided background information and helped the researchers to negotiate entry into the schools and classrooms and to establish rapport with each teacher.

The first month of the school year was a particularly important time in the study. The researchers anticipated that much of the interactional work needed to establish the classroom community would go on during that time (Shultz & Florio, 1979). For this reason, participant observation took place five days per week during the first month of school. As will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, these early ethnographic observations of the classrooms and schools were useful in characterizing the social contexts of the occasions for writing observed throughout the year.

For the remainder of the school year, participant observers spent from one to three whole days in each classroom every week. Because of the discovery-oriented nature of this study, it was decided not to limit observation to times of the day explicitly set aside for reading or language arts or to limit fieldworkers' presence in the classroom to particular days, weeks, or terms. Again, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the nature of classroom writing and its instruction mandated the extensive presence of fieldworkers in the classroom and required flexibility about the kinds and amounts of researcher participation.

Elicitation of teacher thinking was another important aspect of data collection. The two participating teachers kept weekly journals in which they each described their thoughts and plans about the week in general and about school writing in particular. This journal-keeping technique had been used successfully previously in studies of teacher planning undertaken by cognitive psychologists (Clark & Yinger, Note 1). Field notes from participant observation and teacher journals augmented one another in the production of a rich description of classroom writing. Additionally, analysis of each provided useful interpretive frameworks to apply to the other and, as will be discussed shortly, inferences drawn about writing from analysis of one source of data could be cross-checked with data from other sources (Gorden, 1975).

Expansion and clarification of the journal entries was made possible by the addition of weekly interviews of the focal teachers. Once each week a researcher visited the school and talked with the focal teacher about the contents of her journal. These interviews not only provided the researchers with yet another source of information, but also provided encouragement and support to the teachers for their journal keeping efforts and alerted the researchers to forthcoming classroom activities that might be appropriate for special notice.

Two kinds of data were collected periodically to amplify the documentation of writing and its instruction. Teachers normally collected many of the student writings produced in a variety of activities in their rooms. These pieces of student work would later be shared with parents to document student progress in language arts and other skill areas. Researchers copied many of these teacher-collected student writings and, because they frequently were accompanied by field notes describing the circumstances in which they were produced, the writings could be examined both in their own right with reference to the circumstances of their production and used to supplement analysis and description arising in the observational notes, journals, and interviews.

Originally the researchers intended further to supplement fieldwork and journal keeping with one day of videotaping in each of the four segments of the year. These tapes would be analyzed by both the researchers and the teachers in periodic viewing sessions. Deviating from the original plan, videotaping was undertaken for only three days in each classroom and one viewing session was held with each teacher. As will become clearer as the analysis of data unfolds, periodic videotaping of isolated classroom writing activities was a decision made a priori. Once the research was underway, it became evident that the meaningful unit of analysis for writing instruction and planning might not be the isolated lesson but rather a series of socially and thematically-linked writing activities separated from one another in time and space. This realization made periodically collected videotape data and their analysis less prominent parts of the study than originally anticipated. This methodological insight should be taken into account when other studies of the enactment of writing are contemplated. There appears to be a relationship between the research questions and the specific level(s) of analysis that they imply and the data collection stragegies used to greatest advantage by the researchers.

While it was unanticipated that videotaped lessons would be a less than efficient and optimum source of data, the methodological pragmatism of fieldwork and its responsiveness to research questions arising inductively in the field led serendipitously to one form of data that illuminated the study considerably. Originally, weekly meetings were to be held among the researchers and focal teachers to talk about the progress of the study. However, consultants convinced the researchers that to require such meetings was to place undue demands on the time and energies of the teachers. As an alternative, monthly dinner meetings were held throughout the year of fieldwork. These meetings provided for the sociability that is important to continued negotiation of entry and to establishment and maintenance of rapport between the researcher and the informant that are so important in fieldwork. Held in a congenial location in the workplace of neither the teachers nor the researchers, the dinners provided a context in which open discourse was more likely to transpire. These meetings were audiotaped and transcribed. The researchers also documented them in field notes. They were the catalyst for some major insights in the study and citations from the transcripts and notes from those meetings appear throughout the report in testament of this fact.

Several appendices appear at the end of this report. They contain representative samples of field notes, interview notes, journals, videotape catalogues, viewing session transcripts, dinner meeting transcripts, and student work. They are intended merely to provide a sense of the kinds of qualitative data with which the analysts have dealt in completing the study. All of the data are catalogued and available at Michigan State University for further inspection by interested scholars and practitioners.

Data Reduction and Analysis

The processes of reduction and analysis of the descriptive data would have been unwieldy, if not impossible, if the researchers had waited until the completion of data collection to begin them. Working with data that are collected naturalistically over time can present problems and provide advantages. To get the most from our data set, it was necessary to plan for the gradual reduction and analysis of information gathered while still in the field.

The data collected had the following features bearing on reduction and analysis:

1. Some of the data were collected in relatively _unstructured_ ways in that an attempt was made to limit the imposition of a priori analytic categories on what was seen, heard, and read, e.g., field notes, continuous videotapes of naturally occurring classroom activity, writing samples, open-ended journal keeping.

2. Some of the data were collected by more _structured_ means, e.g., scheduled interviews with teachers.

For the most part, categories for analysis were arrived at inductively, as participants sifted the naturalistic data for patterns of meaningful activity in writing and writing instruction. In addition, insights from previous research, literature on both the writing and teaching processes, and the experience of participating teachers provided pontential "conceptual levers" that the researchers used to make sense of the data (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p. 117).

The study's interdisciplinary research staff worked together in the development of a series of descriptions of the acquisition of written literacy in the two classrooms studied. The collaborative working relationship was important for two reasons. First, because of ongoing contact among participating teachers and the interdisciplinary team, it was possible collaboratively to engage in a cyclic process involving the formation of working hypotheses about what was happening in planning and instruction, the testing of those hypotheses in subsequent data collected, and the refinement of the working hypotheses. Such a design made it possible for the project staff to test and refine descriptive models of the process of writing instruction in the two classrooms that were grounded in the observed phenomena. In short, the goal was to render descriptions that were able, in Geer's (1969) words,

> based on an accumulation of data, [to] predict an event or state that people will behave in special ways under certain conditions. (p. 152)

The ability to build such a predictive model is one of the strongest tests of the adequacy of a descriptive case study (Erickson, Note 7).

The second advantage of such a research design for the processes of data reduction and analysis was that it fostered the process of triangulation. The researchers recognized that the social and cognitive phenomena of interest in the study were very complex, and acknowledged, in Gorden's (1975) terms, that

> often the nature of the problem under investigation demands a multimethod approach because the various methods give totally different kinds of information that can supplement each other, because we do not know how to interpret some of the information unless we can couple it with other information, or because we need a cross-check to verify the validity of our observations. (p. 40)

By examining written, oral, and observational data with varying degrees of structure and from the perspectives of various investigators, it was possible to accomplish such triangulation. The researchers intended that the study reflect as validly as possible the perspectives of the participating teachers. By means of multiple methods and opportunities for the researchers and teachers to cross-check their inferences about the data both as they were collected and retrospectively, the researchers hoped to maximize coverage and understanding of writing and its instruction in the two classrooms of interest.

The processes described here yielded the following three-step procedure for reporting the research:

1. Define a descriptive unit of analysis that makes sense to all of the participants in the research. (This unit was termed an "occasion for writing.")

2. Identify a manageably small number of such occasions for writing that are of theoretical importance and of significance to the classroom participants.

3. Describe the genesis, unfolding, and fate of these occasions for writing both individually and in relation to one another using multiple data sources to enrich the descriptions and to cross-check inferences about their meaning.

The case studies of occasions for writing that follow in this report illustrate the diversity of the data collected and one way that data can be interwoven in the presentation of a descriptive analysis.

CHAPTER 4

LOCATING WRITTEN LITERACY IN TWO CLASSROOMS

The central problem of this study was to describe and analyze the events that supported students in their acquisition of written literacy in two classrooms. This chapter first describes the settings in which teaching and learning took place. Next, we define the unit of description and analysis that was discovered jointly by the teachers and researchers in this project: the "occasion for writing." This is followed by descriptions of six occasions for writing that (together with the Safety Posters occasion described in Chapter 1) constitute a carefully selected and representative sample of the ways in which written literacy was supported in the two classrooms.

Schools and Community

This report focuses on a second/third-grade class located in Room 12 of the Conley School and a sixth-grade class in Lincoln Middle School. Both schools are in the East Eden School District. This school district serves approximately 4,600 students. The city of East Eden is the home of a large land-grant university and abuts the capitol of a midwestern state. Its population contains a mix of families of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. The parents of some of the students are employed in state government or the professions; others are working class. The East Eden School District over the past few years has been revising its K-12 writing curriculum, and therefore teachers have been reminded of the high priority placed on writing and its instruction.

Room 12 is the only room of its kind in the Conley Elementary School. Its special nature has important implications for the uses of writing that can be observed there. In order to locate written literacy meaningfully in its social context, it is useful briefly to consider Room 12 as an environment for learning.

Occupying an entire wing of the school building, Room 12 houses four teachers and four cross-age homerooms--two at the second/third-grade level and two at the fourth/fifth. The room has movable walls, a large common area, and four classroom alcoves that can be isolated from one another or merged (see Figure 4). Mixed age interaction, independent and small group learning in centers and a team approach to planning and teaching have been associated with Room 12 since its creation in 1976.

The school of which Room 12 is a part is known in the community as a lively and active place particularly effective in instructing children from a range of ethnic and economic backgrounds. Conley School receives Title I aid, and although many children attending the school come from the middle class households of employees and students of the nearby state university, many others are poor. Some children live in a large, government-subsidized apartment complex or in winterized summer cottages near the school. Many families are employed in local agriculture or the automotive industry, and unemployment has been increasing recently. A large number of Conley children from all economic levels live in single-parent households.

A controversial place since the wing was built, Room 12 receives mixed reviews from teachers and parents. Some teachers

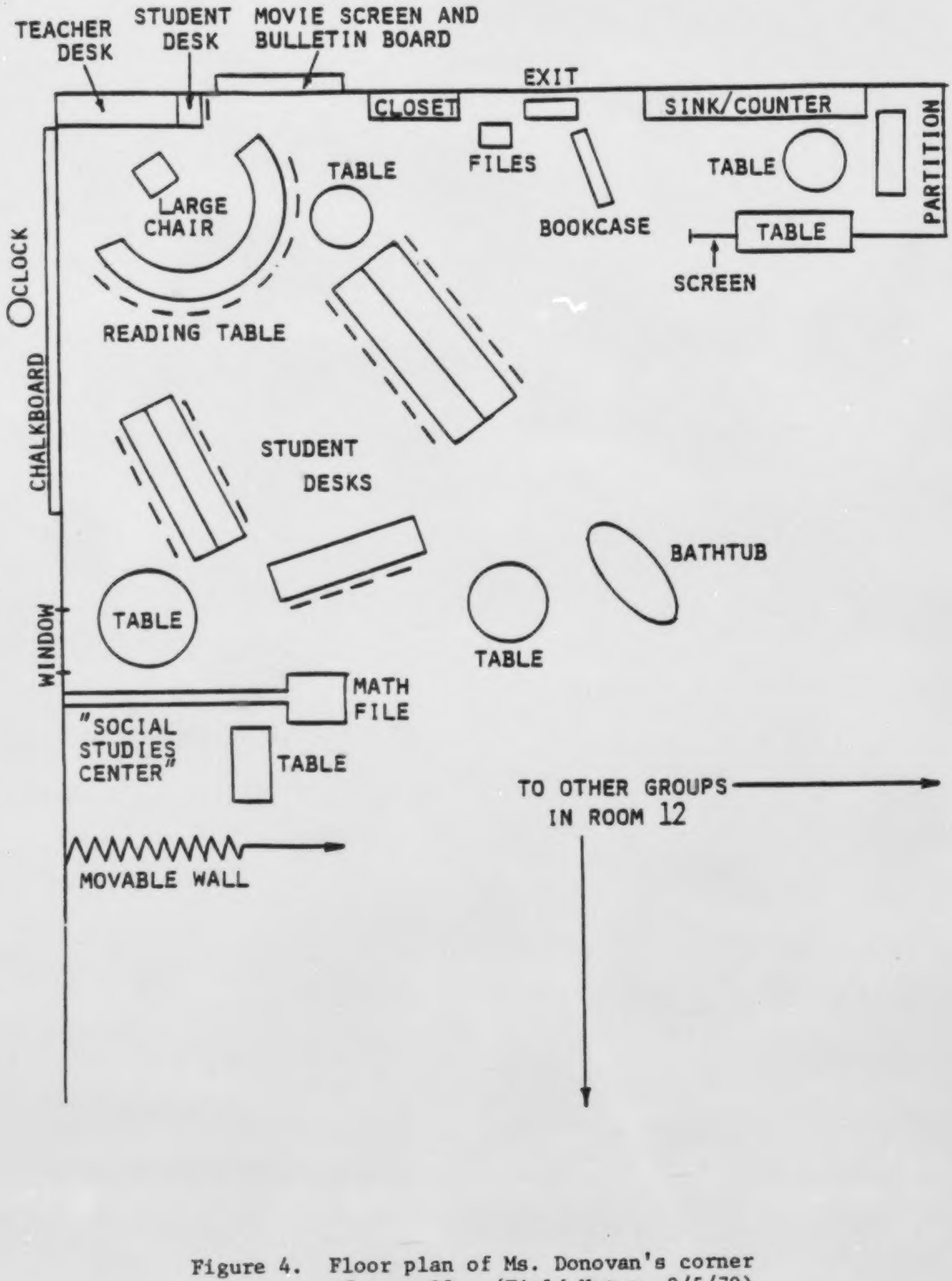
TEACHER DESK
STUDENT DESK
MOVIE SCREEN AND BULLETIN BOARD
EXIT
CLOSET
SINK/COUNTER
PARTITION
FILES
TABLE
BOOKCASE
TABLE
SCREEN
LARGE CHAIR
READING TABLE
CLOCK
CHALKBOARD
STUDENT DESKS
BATHTUB
TABLE
TABLE
WINDOW
MATH FILE
"SOCIAL STUDIES CENTER"
TABLE
TO OTHER GROUPS IN ROOM 12
MOVABLE WALL

Figure 4. Floor plan of Ms. Donovan's corner of room 12. (Field Notes, 9/5/79)

consider it a challenge and a professional opportunity to work there, while others shun the room's potential disorder and lack of privacy in which to teach and plan. Similarly, some parents prefer less open environments for their children. However, it is not uncommon for parents from all backgrounds to inquire of the principal how their child can be assigned to Room 12. In fact, the Room 12 teachers assert that many parents think that only the most able children are assigned there, and that assignment to Room 12 is a status symbol of sorts.

Although Room 12 has changed over the years, the vestiges of the open education movement that inspired it are still apparent in its spatial arrangement and in the teachers' approaches to instruction. During the year, students have the opportunity to make choices about the timing and format of their academic and social activities. In addition, children work in a variety of interactional arrangements including teacher-led large groups, small student groups, mixed-age tutorials, and learning centers.

Lincoln Middle School is one of two middle schools in the district. It encompasses grades six through eight. Lincoln School has approximately 500 students. Although most of the students who attend Lincoln Middle School are from a middle class background and were born in the United States, a few of the students are from foreign countries.

Lincoln Middle School is organized for team teaching. There are three sixth-grade teams, each having two teachers, usually one male and one female. Four academic subjects are taught in teams: English, social studies, science, and math.

The school day is divided into blocks of time for team subjects and time for special area classes, which are physical education, music, art, and foreign languages. The blocks of team time can be arranged in any fashion that the team teachers prefer, since there is not a specified amount of time for a class and no class bells.

The children at Lincoln School are not grouped or tracked; each team is a heterogenous group. The only grouping policy is to balance the number of males and females as evenly as possible.

Mrs. Anderson, the sixth grade teacher in our study, has a reputation in the school district as a teacher who likes to teach writing. Mrs. Anderson has taught elementary school for 19 years, the past 10 years as a sixth-grade teacher in the East Eden school system.

Mrs. Anderson's teammate is Mr. Hathaway. He has taught for nine years, all at Lincoln Middle School. Mrs. Anderson teaches English and social studies; Mr. Hathaway teaches science and math.

There are 60 students in Mrs. Anderson and Mr. Hathaway's team, 30 in each homeroom. When Mrs. Anderson and Mr. Hathaway want to have both of their classes together, which they call "large group," a folding door located between the classrooms is pushed back, creating one large room. Large group is used for showing films, holding class meetings, discussing social events and working on team projects. Figure 5 shows the floor plan of the sixth-grade classroom.

In Mrs. Anderson's classroom, students' tables are close together because of the crowded conditions. The tables are moved into various configurations depending on the teaching situation. Mrs. Anderson

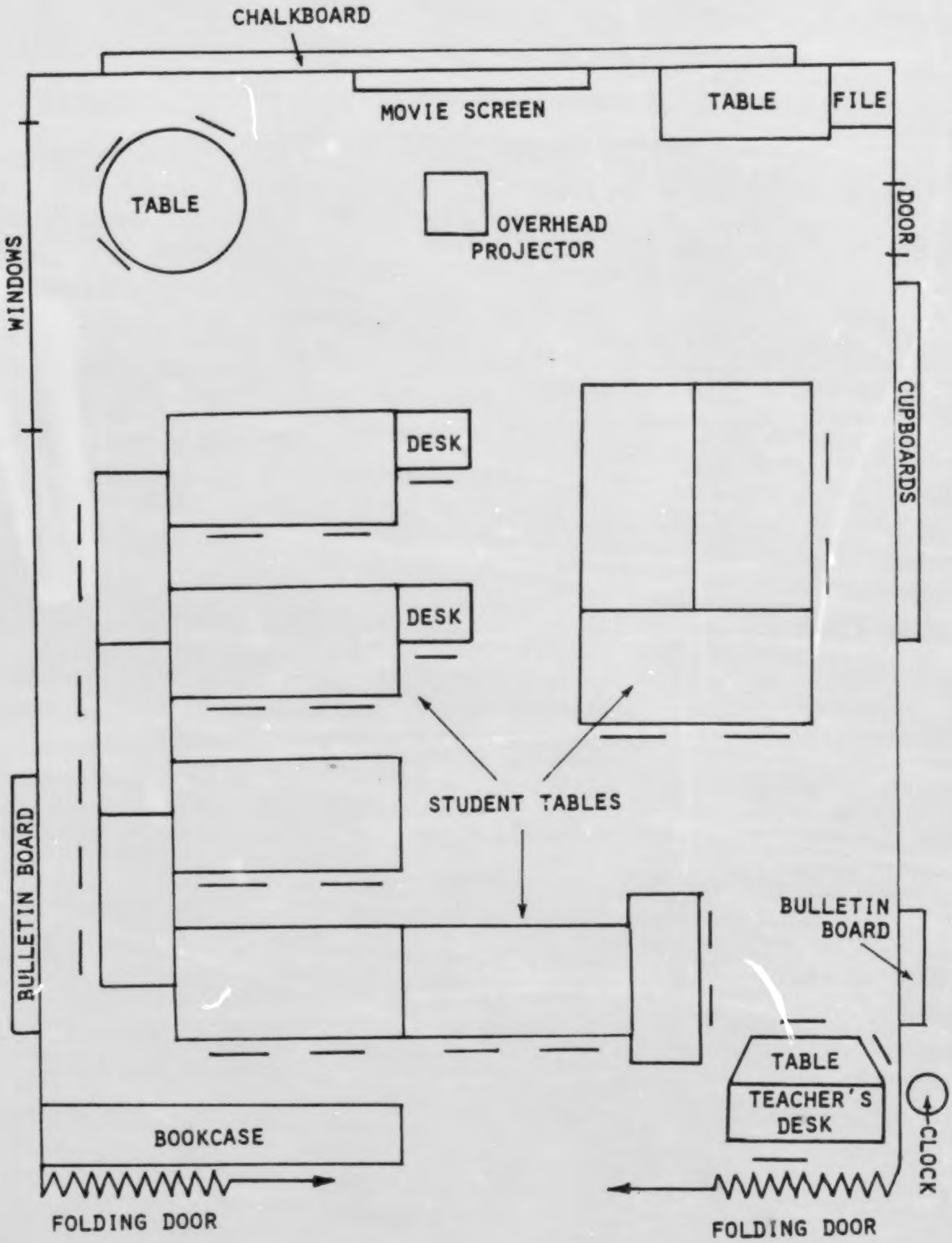
CHALKBOARD
MOVIE SCREEN
TABLE
FILE
TABLE
WINDOWS
OVERHEAD PROJECTOR
DOOR
CUPBOARDS
DESK
DESK
STUDENT TABLES
BULLETIN BOARD
BULLETIN BOARD
TABLE
TEACHER'S DESK
CLOCK
BOOKCASE
FOLDING DOOR
FOLDING DOOR

Figure 5. Floor plan of Mrs. Anderson's sixth-grade classroom.

often mentioned the crowded conditions of the room and felt it affected the students. One wall of the classroom is windows; a chalkboard covers the front wall. An overhead projector is located in front of the chalkboard. Mrs. Anderson uses this projector, rather than the chalkboard, because of her allergy to chalk dust. Mrs. Anderson has her desk at the back of the room and does not use this area as a teaching station.

The Occasion for Writing

In descriptive classroom research one of the most challenging parts of the data reduction process is to discover a unit of description and analysis that is useful in organizing the voluminous amount of information usually generated in such studies. In addition to its power as an organizer and condenser of data, the unit must be meaningful to the participants in the inquiry (teachers, students, and researchers), and must be robust enough to capture the complexity of the phenomena under study without oversimplification. In this study the unit of description and analysis that meets these criteria is the "occasion for writing." It is typified by the following features:

1. Occasions for writing have a duration long enough to link multiple activities.
2. Activities constituting an occasion for writing arise in the context of or are planned with reference to classroom and community life.
3. Activities are linked thematically over time within an occasion.
4. Activities constituting an occasion are expressive in nature and may involve multiple modes on the continuum of oral-written expression (e.g., writing, drawing, speaking before an audience, reading, etc.).

Occasions for writing frequently invove skill integration both among the language arts of speaking, listening, reading and writing, and across subject areas. In addition they often integrate school and non-school life experiences of the student writers.

Occasions for writing require a range of kinds of teacher planning including the ad hoc *seizing of opportunities* to write in the course of everyday school life; *proactive planning* to develop ways to support and maintain expressive activities; post hoc *reflection upon classroom life and writing* to identify potential occasions for writing and ways to enrich them as opportunities to use multiple expressive forms and perform many communicative functions; and *creation of curriculum* for and with students in an instructional area marked by the absence of prepared materials, district mandates, or ready-made evaluation instruments.

As the study proceeded the teachers and researchers achieved consensus on which classroom events had made significant contributions to the acquisition of written literacy in the two classrooms. But the identification of the occasion for writing as the meaningful unit of analysis in this study did not take place until after the data collection year ended. It was not until the research team could look back on the complete corpus of descriptive data and reflect on the commonalities of the "high points" of the school year that the profile of an occasion for writing was constructed.

After the occasion for writing was defined conceptually, one occasion (the Safety Posters) was written up as a test of the construct. After considerable feedback and editing by the research team, the Safety Posters description was elevated to the status of a model, and guidelines for describing other occasions for writing were drawn up (Figure 6). These guidelines were followed by the authors of this report in writing descriptions of the occasions for reported here.

The final section of this chapter consists of descriptions and analyses of six occasions for writing:

Second/Third Grade	Sixth Grade
Diary Time	Life Books
Pen Pals	The Magazine Project
	Planning a Dinner Party
	Researching the World

In addition, the reader is reminded of the Safety Posters occasion for writing from the second/third-grade data described at the beginning of Chapter 1. The seven occasions for writing offered here were not the only occasions that took place in the two classrooms during the year of study. But they do constitute an important part of the writing curriculum in each classroom and depict a representatively wide range of complexity, problems, partial failures, and partial successes in the fostering of written literacy in schools. The presentation of these particular occasions reflects the judgments of the participating teachers and researchers about which classroom events most significantly influenced students' school experiences with writing. These occasions were also selected to depict the evolution of writing activity across the entire school year.

Page Limit: 15-20 pages

Minimum Contents:

- Dates and Time of Year
- Duration
- Participants
- List of Parts or Phases of the Occasion
    - Thematic Link Among Parts
- Teacher Role(s) in Shaping the Occasion
    - Genesis
    - Implementation and Modification
    - Fate and Closure
- Student Role(s) in Shaping the Occasion
- Relation of the Occasion to Other Parts of Participants' Lives
- Purpose(s) of the Occasion
- Function(s) of the Occasion
- Audience
- Examples of Written Products
- Relationship Between Teacher Thinking and Classroom Interaction

Figure 6. Guidelines for descriptions of occasions for writing.

Diary Time

Years ago psychologist Gordon Allport attempted to use the diary as a way to understand the inner lives of his subjects. He found that, although it was a powerful written form, the diary was not a simple one. Allport (1942) noted, for example, that despite the apparent privacy and revelatory potential of this written form, the "picture of the theoretical perfection of the diary . . . is often not realized in practice" (pp. 95-96). The realities of the writing situation place limits on the diarist. This is in large part because diary writing, like all writing, is both a social and a personal activity.

If one imagines the ideal diarist working at will and in blessed isolation, issues of social context appear not to be a problem. Yet we know that few diarists work in this fashion. Many diarists intend that their writing will someday be read by an audience other than themselves[3] or use their diaries to record and reflect upon their social relations.[4] When diaries are attempted within institutional settings such as the classroom, their "theoretical perfection" is clouded still further by the realities of school life. Most obviously, diaries written in school are not written in privacy. They are often initiated, not by the diarist, but by the teacher. And since most writing done in school has an audience, the issue of audience in classroom diaries is, at best, uncertain.

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[3] An example is the diary of the late Bostonian, Arthur Crew Inman. Compiled between the years 1919 and 1963, Inman's diary presents his view on life and politics and contains more than ten million words. The diary is currently being edited for publication by Harvard professor of literature, Daniel Aaron. It is reported that in this enterprise Aaron has been helped by the fact that

> the diary itself contains detailed instructions to the future editor, dictating how the manuscript was to be treated, from questions of style to punctuation. Inman's strictest editorial fiat was that nothing shocking be removed on account of squeamishness (Colt, Harvard Magazine, May-June, 1981, p. 50).

[4] Diary writing can be used to deal constructively with personal problems. Among the diary writing techniques recommended in this

This description examines the social complexities of diary writing in one second/third-grade classroom. It does so in the form of a life history of diary time as an occasion for writing. As such, the report does not offer a recipe for how to keep classroom diaries. Instead it portrays the opportunities for and limits upon diary writing in the classroom. This portrayal is intended to stimulate the reader's critical thinking about two issues--the diary's potential within the school writing curriculum and, perhaps more importantly, the classroom as an environment for the teaching and learning of writing.

Genesis

Our first regular interview with Ms. Donovan, the second/third grade teacher in Room 12, took place on September 5, the day before the school year began. She told us that this year she planned to have her students write in diaries for the last 10 or 15

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regard are some potentially social ones including the writing of dialogues and "unsent letters" (Rainer, 1978). In addition, such techniques have been adapted for classroom use. In the "dialogue journal," the student makes regular diary entries that are responded to in writing by the teacher. In the course of these written dialogues, thoughts and feelings are explored interactively, and there is opportunity for development of written language skills (Staton, Note 8; Shuy, Note 9).

minutes of each school day, and that she planned to use that time herself to write in the journal that she was keeping as part of the research project. She said she expected to write in a "stream of consciousness" fashion. Field notes written on the same day indicate that as Ms. Donovan drafted a model daily schedule she allotted the final 10 minutes of the day to diary time. Ms. Donovan commented to the fieldworker that having her students write in diaries was something she had wanted to do for a long time and that her participation in the research project would "give added impetus" to it (Field Notes, 9/5/79).

Getting Started

On the first day of school, Diary Time was expanded to the final full hour of the day, to allow time for Ms. Donovan to orient the students (i.e., communicate her plan for Diary Time) and for the students to make and decorate cardboard covers for their diaries as well as to write their first diary entries. Following afternoon recess, at about 2:15 p.m., Ms. Donovan had the children sit on the carpet in a filled circle (a configuration used for class meetings and for receiving instruction and directions from the teacher). The field notes (9/6/79) pick up the story:

> Looking up at the chalkboard where the schedule had been written, one child said, "It's almost time for diary." Another child said, "What's that?" Ms. Donovan said, "That's what we have to discuss. Some kids don't know what it is yet."
>
> Proceeding, Ms. Donovan asked, "Does anyone know what a diary is?"
>
> Linda: "Things that you write down that you think of."
> Kathy: ". . .private"
> Sarah: ". . .that you think are important"

After taking some comments from the floor, Ms. Donovan noted that "no two diaries are the same." Anthony chimed in at this point: "I already have a diary with a key and lock." There was a discussion about why one might lock a diary. The issue of privacy was highlighted, and Ms. Donovan said, "I don't want to read them unless you want to share them with me or the class." She offered to lock them in a filing cabinet drawer.

Dani asked, "How do you correct them?"

Ms. Donovan said that they were not to be corrected and that she, too, would have one.

Considerable time was spent constructing the diaries, and the procedure had the following parts:

1. The diary covers were to be decorated with crayon or magic marker.
   Children who finished decorating ahead of time were not to begin writing in the diaries but were to take a worksheet and complete it. The worksheets were mazes and the children were told they could color them. They were told the mazes would be "corrected."
2. Children were to decorate their diaries with picture(s) of favorite things. Then the diaries were filled with five sheets of lined paper.
3. The third-grade paper was distinguished from the second-grade paper (they are essentially the same except that third grade paper has narrower spaces between the lines). Ms. Donovan asked the fieldworker to help distribute paper, and she found the distinction by grade disconcerting. It was noted by the children, but not accompanied with an explanation, and each time the fieldworker/helper gave someone paper she had to ask her/him their grade--somewhat of a non sequitur to some of the children.
4. When the children asked what would happen when they finished using the five pages, they were told that they could "make a new one."

5. Ms. Donovan gave an example of the cover illustration for the diary. She drew a Christmas tree. Three children (Mary, Stefan, and Kris) drew Christmas trees, too. Other covers included the following: bicycles, a star that evolved into the emblem of the Dallas cowboys, a house, a cat, a swing set, a tree.

Once the covers were underway, Ms. Donovan passed out the "third grade paper" and asked the researcher/helper to pass out the "second-grade paper." Then the children began to write in their diaries, as Ms. Donovan circulated stapling the booklets together. There were several procedural directives as the writing began.

1. With regard to privacy, Ms. Donovan said that you shouldn't ask other people what they are writing;
2. regarding help with spelling words, Ms. Donovan said that she would also be writing in her diary and not looking up and around the room. Therefore, students should come up to her table if they needed help. Ms. Donovan said that the researcher/helper would be available to help as well. The researcher decided to write in her field note journal during diary-writing time. Much like during Uninterrupted Silent Reading (USR), Ms. Donovan and the fieldworker both modeled the process and, perhaps, enabled it by this strategy.
3. Ms. Donovan said that she would share part of what she was writing in her diary--i.e., that she has a good class and has had a good day. The rest, she said, "is for me." She also pointed out that diary time "was sort of like USR, but was UW (Uninterrupted Writing), so that you can think and write down your thoughts by yourself." She added that "if you can't think of anything, write the word 'write' until you can think of an idea."

During UW, some children came to the fieldworker with scraps of paper and asked her to spell words for them. The first was Stan. He had a full sheet of third-grade paper and said that he would keep the words she spelled for him in a list so that he could remember them. He said that he did this last year with his second-grade teacher. Some of the children came with questions about what to write--e.g., Do you write about "just school," or can you write about "before school?"

During the diary writing time, there was not much talk among the students. For the first time, the fieldworker saw some children put up tall books and workbooks around their papers as barriers. There appeared to be much concern for privacy and the students did not hasten to show their entries to Ms. Donovan or her. Writing went on this way from 2:50 until 3:00.

At 3:01, Ms. Donovan asked the children to stop. She asked, "How many people had a hard time thinking of things to write about?" She suggested that anyone who didn't should give them some ideas. (She

> was apparently aware of Chet, the boy who had the most trouble thinking of something to write. He had come to the fieldworker for help in decorating his cover. When she suggested that he might want to *write something inside*, he said he did not know what to write. Attempting to get him started, she discovered that he is new in town, has yet to make many friends, and therefore felt he did not have much to recount. Ms. Donovan addressed much of the post-writing discussion to Chet, looking at him a lot.) Ms. Donovan asked the class, "How did you think of things to write?" She called on two boys who seemed to have no trouble making entries--
>
> Joseph: "I thought."
> Anthony: "I don't know."
>
> Ms. Donovan said, "It isn't easy to talk about. I had a hard time also." But she suggested topics such as:
>
> --what you liked about today
> --what you didn't like about today
> --how I felt
>
> "How do you feel right now--at the end of the day?" The students said that they were "tired," that they "wanted to stay some more." Saying that they could write about these feelings and that she didn't want to "cut them off," Ms. Donovan promised that there would be more time tomorrow. She let those that wanted to continue writing do so for a few minutes but began to collect the diaries and put them in her file cabinet.
>
> Diary writing was followed by a very brief clean up and dismissal. (Field Notes, 9/6/79)

Discussion

Diary Time was clearly a planned occasion for writing that originated with the teacher. By allocating a regular daily slot for diary writing even before she met her students and by discussing her intentions with the researchers, Ms. Donovan made a commitment to establish this activity as a routine. On September 5, we had no detailed evidence of her plan or mental picture of what Diary Time would be like, or of what purposes she thought it might serve for her students. But Ms. Donovan's scheduling of Diary Time as the very last activity of the day and her expressed desire to write in her own journal at that time suggest a picture of a quiet period of private reflection on and writing about the major events of the day, during which each child would be in his or her own little world for a while. As we shall see, the realities of the classroom transformed this idyllic picture in many unforeseen ways. As we reflect on the first Diary Time, a number of interesting features of this occasion bear mention. We address them under the headings of planning, implementation, audience, and function.

Planning. As mentioned above, Diary Time was clearly a teacher-originated and teacher-planned activity (as distinguished from student-initiated activities, mandated curricular activities, or unexpected, serendipitous events). Ms. Donovan told us of her intention to have the students write daily diary entries on the day before school began. She allocated a full hour of the important first day of school to Diary Time, and built in a 10-minute time slot at the end of each daily schedule for diary writing. Her comments on the day before school began, and her actions during the first Diary Time indicate that she had wanted to have students keep diaries for some years, that she had never done so before, that her participation in a study of written literacy (including her own keeping of a journal) provided added impetus to institute Diary Time, and that she was convinced that Diary Time would be a valuable activity for her students. In short, it was important to Ms. Donovan that Diary Time succeed.

Much of Ms. Donovan's planning for Diary Time must be inferred from indirect evidence. Like other experienced elementary teachers whose planning has been studied (Clark & Yinger, Note 1), she did not write out an elaborate, step-by-step plan book entry for Diary Time. The only visible record of planning for the first Diary Time is the written schedule for that day. Yet her comments recorded in the September 5 interview and field notes, her relatively elaborate communication of the Diary Time plan to the students, and the fact that materials for making the diary covers were ready when needed all indicate that Ms. Donovan had an elaborate plan worked out in her mind--she was not simply "playing it by ear." Although her planning was a necessary preparation for Diary Time, it was invisible to outside observers.

Implementation. It is usually the case in the unpredictable world of the elementary school classroom that activities are not implemented exactly as planned. This discrepancy between plan and action is especially likely to be visible in the early days and weeks of school, when teacher and students are first getting to know one another, and also in the case of activities that a teacher is implementing for the first time. The first Diary Time met both of these conditions, and Ms. Donovan adjusted her plan to accomodate the unpredictable. In the orienting discussion of what diaries are, she built on student contributions of ideas about the purposes and contents of diary entries. The discussion of the privacy issue was triggered by a student reporting that he owned a diary with a lock and key. Ms. Donovan incorporated the fieldworker as an aide in this activity, who handed out paper and helped the children spell words. Implementation of Ms. Donovan's advance plan depended very much on her interactive decision making and flexibility in building on student contributions. The plan was tailored to fit the moment rather than the moment forced to fit the structure of the plan.

Another feature of plan implementation worth mentioning is Ms. Donovan's use of modeling. She modeled both the decoration of a diary cover and the diary writing process itself. Further, she shared one part of her own diary entry with the class, but told them that the remainder of the entry was private ("just for me"), showing that each writer was to be the judge of what to share and what to keep secret. Ms. Donovan's use of modeling shows up in various ways in other occasions for writing throughout the year. The first Diary Time is the earliest example of a pattern of modeling in which the emphasis is on making explicit how the teacher is thinking about and doing the writing task herself rather than telling the students what the "right way" to do the task is. Implicit in this approach to modeling a task are the teacher's concern that students learn and attend to the processes (of thought and action) as well as to the products (a diary cover or entry), sufficient respect for the importance and meaningfulness of the task that the teacher herself will enter into it as a full participant, and an openness to accept decisions by individual students to approach the task in a way that is different from that modeled by the teacher (as long as they do participate).

Another element of Diary Time implementation worth comment is that the activity combined construction, art work, oral discussion, and writing. Every student was able to make and decorate a personalized diary cover, and to participate as a listener or speaker in the discussion of what diaries are and how they can be useful. Even those children who did not write anything in their diaries had a concrete, visible product to show for the first day of school. Furthermore, the cover decorations were to be "pictures of favorite things"--a way for students to reflect on, declare, and make public (to the teacher and to classmates) some personal information. A measure of success for all students was built into the activity, and the link between drawing and writing was manifested on the first day of school.

Finally, it is clear that implementation of the first Diary Time was also the beginning of Ms. Donovan's planning for the second and subsequent Diary Times. She paid attention to the unanticipated problems in implementation that cropped up, and immediately began thinking of ways to solve these problems. After the children were dismissed at the end of the first day of school, Ms. Donovan wrote a journal entry of her own that was both a reflection on Diary Time activity and a plan for improving the process on the following day. In her reflection and planning, Ms. Donovan identified two problems encountered in the first Diary Time (children interrupting her to ask how to spell words that they want to write, and some children who couldn't think of anything to write) and came up with the idea to help solve the second of these problems:

> Discussed writing a diary; emphasized idea of personal thoughts and importance of privacy. Most caught on quickly...some kept their own diaries at home.

> I had planned to keep my journal while the class works in theirs, but for the first few weeks it will be difficult to accomplish with their interruptions for spelling and ideas.
>
> Tomorrow I'll read short selections from logs and journals kept by such people as Anne Frank and Washington Irving and have the children figure out how they have become useful for us and possibly give them some ideas. I'll have some share their entries from yesterday if they wish, then pull a small group to work out some strategies to help them think of what to write. (Journal, 9/6/79)

So we see that, especially in a continuing activity like Diary Time, the teacher played the roles of observant and reflective critic of her own teaching, problem solver and formative evaluator of classroom processes, as well as leader, instructor, and facilitator of those activities.

Audience. Who was the audience for the student diary entries? At one level the teacher intended that the young diarist himself or herself would be the primary audience. The discussion of privacy reflected in the field notes quoted above, and the seriousness with which teacher and students guarded their own privacy lend support to the hypothesis of "self as audience." But, at the same time, there is evidence to suggest that both teacher and students saw teacher and peers as a potential audience for diary entries. The facts that Diary Time was a teacher-imposed task, that the teacher knew and taught about "the rules" of diary keeping, that the teacher read aloud a part of her own first journal entry, and that the teacher collected and stored the diaries in her filing cabinet all supported the idea of "teacher as audience." Student concerns about accurate spelling, questions about how the teacher "will correct them" (Field

Notes, 9/6/79), and teacher assistance for those who could not think of what to write constitute additional evidence of teacher as audience. Peers were introduced as a potential audience by Ms. Donovan's comment that "I don't want to read them [the diaries] unless you want to share them with me or the class" (Field Notes, 9/6/79).

According to the fieldworker, the children appeared to be a bit confused by the mixed message of privacy, on the one hand, and teacher/peers as audience on the other (Field Notes, 9/6/79). The diary writing activity could be seen as an invitation to engage in two incompatible tasks: (1) private, freewheeling writing intended for the author's eyes only, in which description and reflection were of paramount importance, and "errors" of form, spelling, or grammar were of no consequence, and (2) "correct" writing about one's daily experiences and feelings, that fit the conventions of diary entries as a literary form and the conventions of neatness, spelling, punctuation, coherence, and length of school writing tasks that please the teacher.[3] Taking the perspective of a seven- or eight-year-old child on the first day of school, one can imagine a number of ways that he or she might respond to this dilemma:

1. Treat diary time as "just another school writing task," and write what you think will please the teacher. Get help from an adult with spelling words and with further clarification of "the rules";

---

[3] It is interesting to speculate about how this internal tension in the diary writing occasion relates to Doyle's (Note 10) research on classroom task structure in which he points out that even children relatively new to school are caught up on the "performance for grade" exchange. Indeed, it is reasonable to claim that all school writing occasions initiated by the teacher include the teacher as one important audience.

2. Treat Diary Time as a reflective writing task which the usual "rules" of school wiring are mercifully suspended; maintain privacy;
3. Write nothing. Let the teacher remove all of the ambiguity from this new kind of writing task by "helping you think of what [and how] to write."

These three alternatives characterize the observed range of student responses to the first Diary Time. The central point of this interpretation is that ambiguity about the audience of a student writing activity can affect both the interpretation of the task and the students' performance of the writing in diverse ways.

Function. Initially, the primary function of Diary Time intended by Ms. Donovan was to provide her students with an opportunity to reflect on the events of the day and to become aware of their own feelings and thoughts about school life. As mentioned above, the evidence for this intended function includes Ms. Donovan's scheduling of Diary Time as the last activity of the school day and her expressed desire to write reflectively in her own journal while the children wrote in their diaries.

Ms. Donovan saw her own journal writing in connection with the research project and the students' daily diary writing as potentially serving similar ends. In an early journal entry she speculates about this parallel:

> Sharing this journal and my thoughts during the week with another [the researcher] on a scheduled basis is helping me to reflect in a less nebulous manner on planning and assessment of lessons. By articulating my conceptions and beliefs, it has become easier for me to present ideas in a more logical manner with fewer inconsistencies. I

> wonder if the children will develop greater oral ease through writing and reflecting on their ideas? (Journal, 9/11/79)

The first Diary Time also served as an opportunity for every student to succeed at constructing and decorating a diary--a visible product of the first day of school. Furthermore, the decorations on the diary covers constituted information about each student's "favorite things" that was useful to the teacher, the individual young artist, and his or her peers. In this way, the first Diary Time contributed to the process of building a social system in the classroom--getting the year off to a good start by getting to know one another.

The investment of a full hour of the first day of school to Diary Time also served to communicate to the students that writing was to be an important part of life in this classroom, and that Ms. Donovan would do whatever was necessary to insure that everyone would write. Providing the correct spelling of words and her plan to work with small groups who "could not think of anything to write" are examples of Ms. Donovan's determination to have every student participate, even at the expense of journal writing time for herself.

Beyond communicating teacher expectations about writing in Room 12, the first Diary Time also served as a diagnostic or writing assessment opportunity for Ms. Donovan. She learned, somewhat to her surprise, which students had the most difficulty writing. She learned that all of her students were concerned about correct spelling of words, even though the teacher-intended audience for the diary was oneself alone. She also learned that the concept of a diary and the personal and historical functions that a diary can serve were not well understood by her students, and she formed a plan to fill this gap of knowledge and motivation. And finally, Ms. Donovan began to learn about the amount and kind of teacher energy it would take to introduce, implement, and maintain a complex and long-term occasion for writing with this particular group of students.

Finally, Diary Time served a managerial function: to calm down students at the end of the school day and to end on a reflective, academically justifiable note. The comparison of diary writing to Uninterrupted Silent Reading (USR) that Ms. Donovan made when introducing the first Diary Time is telling (Field Notes, 9/6/79). Ms. Donovan had used USR following recess and lunch to calm children down and to focus them on an individual academic task as they returned to the classroom, one by one or two by two. Diary Time (or Uninterrupted Writing) served a closure and transition function between school and home, just as USR was intended (in part) to ease the transition between active, social, out-of-classroom activity and calmer, often individual, in-class academic activity.

The Complexity of Diary Writing in School

Diary Time was an occasion for writing that did not live up to all of Ms. Donovan's hopes and expectations, yet it was one from which the students, the teacher, and the researchers derived substantial benefit. In the year that we observed Ms. Donovan's class, Diary Time was undertaken for the first time. We have learned from research on teacher planning and from the reports of experienced teachers that teaching something for the first time can amount to a pilot test (Clark & Elmore, Note 11). The pilot test of Diary Time in Ms. Donovan's room, while only partially successful, yielded many insights about writing, instruction, and the classroom learning environment. In a sense, the life history of Diary Time is offered as an opportunity for the reader to experience that pilot test vicariously and think about its implications for his or her own teaching.

For all of the instructional soundness of Diary Time, the seeds of its ultimate difficulties were present from the outset. Despite teacher planning and support, Diary Time, like many classroom activities, took on a life of its own as the year progressed. By year's end, about six children were still keeping diaries in school, but they were doing so as independent activity during their free time. The field notes show that, not far into October, the regular ten-minute slot intended for Diary Time was at first shifted to various parts of the day. By January it had been removed entirely from the daily calendar.

What were the difficulties in sustaining a daily Diary Time? Ms. Donovan had some ideas on the subject when she was interviewed almost a full year later:

> Originally I had hoped to write in a diary at the same time the children did, but it didn't work out too well. Because even though there was the idea of the diaries being private and no one had to read them except them and that they were just for their own use, they still wanted to spell the words correctly and have it so it had some form to it. And they would have to come up and ask me to spell a lot of the words. I couldn't write in my diary very much. And then...we tried to set a special time aside every day and that just got to be almost impossible because of the way the schedule of the day goes...So from wanting to write everyday it went to three times a week and then it sort of just died out after a while because it was one of those activities that was real difficult to fit in. Another problem with it was that

> the *children had a real difficult time reflecting back on what they had done*...Even if you gave them topics to write about. They wanted to write about what happened in their lives but *they didn't think their lives were very interesting*...Most of the kids at the end of the year weren't writing in diaries. (Interview 9/8/80; Italics inserted by the authors)

It is notable that in making sense of the decline and fall of Diary Time Ms. Donovan cites factors that are related both to the private mental lives of her students and to the situational context of Diary Time. Her inferences that the children had difficulty reflecting and did not think their lives were very interesting derive from the student behaviors she observed. Diary Time was plagued with both the concern on children's part that their spelling would be correct and the common lament by the children that they did not know what to write. This state of affairs seems paradoxical when we think of the diary as a private and personal written form. Yet when we locate diary writing in the classroom context, it becomes apparent that the children's concerns make sense given the expectations about writing in general in school and the status of Diary Time as a part of the day's scheduled activities. Living with this paradox, student writers became stalled--and so did Ms. Donovan. It comes as no surprise, then, that Diary Time lost its priority in a daily schedule filled with a myriad of other instructional activities. A re-examination of some of the contextual features of Diary Time can help us to understand its problems.

From the outset, Diary Time contained a number of conflicting messages regarding issues of privacy, correctness, and audience. Different students approached the task of diary keeping in different ways that ultimately related to whether the diary functioned for them as private written reflection or as public sharing of thoughts in written form. Some of Ms. Donovan's efforts to communicate her plan for Diary Time and to support its undertaking contributed to the ambiguous nature of classroom diary writing. Ms. Donovan hints at these problems in the interview quoted above.

The Use of a Model

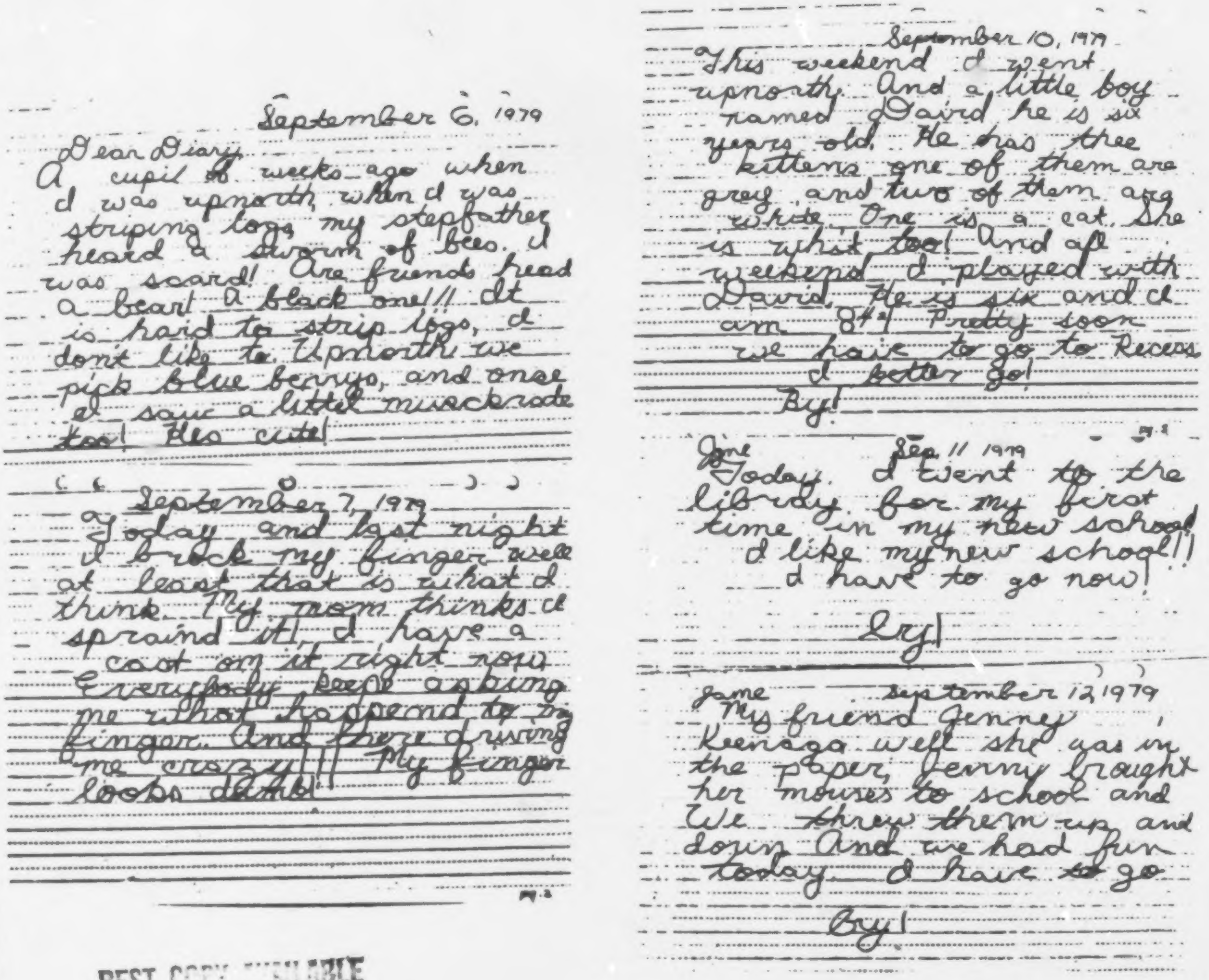
As noted in the description of Diary Time, Ms. Donovan attempted to provide models for the children in several ways. First, she made a model diary with decorated cover for the children. Second, she hoped to write in her own journal during Diary Time, thus modeling the process. And, third, she brought sample diary entries from published diaries to the class to share when children seemed to have difficulty getting started. Modeling provided both a prop and a standard, and in so doing, both enabled and limited the students' diary writing. We can see this when we observe that a number of children copied Ms. Donovan's diary cover for their own. In addition, the sharing of published diary entries, while illustrative in their content and form, conveyed that diaries are not necessarily private and that there might be standards for what constitutes an appropriate diary entry despite Ms. Donovan's assertion that no one need read them. Finally, because of contextual constraints to be discussed below, Ms. Donovan was not afforded the privacy needed to write in her own journal during Diary Time. Thus an important part of the modeling process was unavailable to her and the students.

Audience and the Concern for Correctness

Much writing done in the course of a day in Room 12 was done as academic performance. As such, that writing had Ms. Donovan as its primary audience and was evaluated by her. There are contextual features marking writing as academic performance in Room 12. They include the instigation of the writing by the teacher, the scheduling of the writing as part of the day's work, the collection of the writing, and the production of the writing on special paper different for the second graders than for the third graders. Diary Time was to be a writing time that was private and personal. It was intended to stimulate student writing unconstrained by worries about correctness or audience. It was to be an opportunity to practice thinking on paper. Yet a second look at Diary Time shows us that it had many of the situational trappings of writing as academic performance. First, Diary Time was given regularly-scheduled status and was initiated by the teacher. Second, diaries were collected and kept in the teacher's locked file cabinet. While this move was intended to ensure privacy, it is worth noting that only tests and workbooks and other official written materials were kept in that cabinet, and additionally that the children did not have access to their diaries without Ms. Donovan's unlocking the cabinet. Diaries were, as reported in the field notes, written on official school paper that varied by grade. Although not required, spelling correctness was reinforced by the adults in the room by the very fact that they were willing to interrupt their own writing to help students achieve correctness of surface features of their writing.

A sample from the first five diary entries of Jane, one of the third-grade students, provides evidence that many features of Diary Time may have resembled formal academic writing rather than private written reflection (see Figure 7). Jane was a prolific writer who eventually offered to share her diary with the fieldworker. At first, Jane wrote at some length about things that had happened to her outside school and classroom. She experimented with audience by initially personifying the diary and addressing it directly ("Dear Diary"). Her second entry had no such direct address, but her third again resembles the "letter to diary" format by containing a closing ("I better go! By!"). It is interesting to note, however, that by the fourth day of school, while keeping the closing, Jane begins her entry as the students are requested to begin all their written work in Ms. Donovan's room--with her name just opposite the date.

Another notable change in Jane's diary entries occurs on the fourth day of school. Many children had been having difficulty deciding what to write during the first few days of school. In general, Ms. Donovan's suggestions limited the scope of the writing to what was happening in school, as was reported in the field notes (What you liked about today; what you didn't like about today; how you felt). While this strategy was intended for children not writing as fluently as Jane (and, presumably offered to ease the burden of recall), it is worthy of conjecture that Jane had begun to learn by day four that school-related topics were the most appropriate for classroom diaries. Her entries change in their subject matter and



September 6. 1979
Dear Diary,
A cupil 2 weeks ago when
I was upnorth when I was
striping logs my stepfather
heard a swarm of bees. I
was scard! Are friends head
a beart a black one!! It
is hard to strip logs, I
dont like to. Upnorth we
pick blue berrys, and onse
I saw a littel musckrode
too! Hes cute!

September 7, 1979
Today and last night
I brock my finger well
at least that is what I
think. My mom thinks I
spraind it!, I have a
cast on it right now
Everybody keeps asking
me what happend to my
finger. And there driving
me crazy!!! My finger
looks dumb!

September 10, 1979
This weekend I went
upnorth. And a little boy
named David he is six
years old. He has thee
kittens one of them are
grey and two of them are
white. One is a cat. She
is whit too! And all
weekend I played with
David. He is six and I
am 8½ Pretty soon
we have to go to Recess
I better go!
By!

Jane Sep 11 1979
Today. I went to the
librady for my first
time in my new school
I like my new school!!
I have to go now!
By!

Jane September 12, 1979
My friend Jenney,
Keenaga well she was in
the paper, Jenny braught
her mouses to school and
We threw them up and
down And we had fun
today. I have to go
By!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Figure 7. Jane's diary.

length after the first three days and become decidedly more school-related.

In a paradoxical way, the more support provided by Ms. Donovan in the form of models, protected time for diary writing, ensured safekeeping of the diaries, and help with spelling, the farther from the original intent of diary writing the class moved. Faced with ambiguity about purpose, audience, and format, the students increased their pursuit of help from the teacher, the teacher continued to support the task, and a cycle began that moved most children far from diary writing by the end of the first month of school.

Diary Time illuminates complexity of two sorts. It portrays the complexity of the writing process, where privacy and audience stand in a figure/ground relationship that shifts depending on the writer's intentions and the conventions of a particular genre. In addition, Diary Time illuminates the complexity of the classroom as an environment for writing. In Diary Time we see that there are social norms embedded in classroom life that govern the functions of writing there. Those norms give meaning both to the material environment (lined paper, filing cabinets, daily schedules) and the social relations that constitute everyday school life. It was difficult for the teacher and students to re-cast their usual ways of behaving and making sense of writing in school in the service of the innovation of Diary Time.

All of the complexities mentioned above contributed to the difficulties experienced in the attempt to stimulate writing in Ms. Donovan's room by means of Diary Time. We can learn a great deal by reflecting upon those difficulties. Most obviously, we can learn that social context is profoundly involved in the writing process as students seek to discover the purpose, audience, and consequences of their writing. Many facets of the classroom environment contribute to the sense that students will make of the writing task and to their subsequent writing. Implements, materials, time, and space are all powerful parts of the school writing activity. In addition, the teacher may be variously defined as initiator, helper, critic, or audience for school writing. The way that her/his role is defined has implications for the student's social identity as well. Redefinitions of the roles of teacher and student in the writing process--no matter how subtle or bold--require attention and negotiation. In the end, because of such interactive complexity, not every negotiation will look precisely like the one the teacher envisioned in planning, and not every one will capture the imagination and energy of every student. But all attempts at improvement of writing instruction will bear fruit if, when examined in retrospect, they can be seen to inform the continuing processes of setting realistic goals, planning meaningful activities, and structuring the learning environment to enhance the acquisition of written literacy.

Pen Pals

Introduction

One of writing's great powers can also be the source of great difficulty for students. By means of writing it is possible to communciate our thoughts to an absent audience over time and distance. Yet it is precisely the absence of our audience (and the uncertainty or lack of a reply) that often makes writing far more difficult than conversation. Much has been said and written about letter-writing as a curricular device providing students the opportunity to practice communicating with an absent audience and to have the exhilarating experience of a reply. Letter-writing is unlike many other classroom writing activities in that, by definition, it moves student writing outside the classroom walls, it admits of an audience other than the teacher, and it serves purposes other than academic performance. In these ways, it can be said that letter-writing more closely resembles transactional writing in the world outside school than do many other school writing tasks.

This description of Pen Pals, an occasion for writing in Ms. Donovan's class, examines a five-month correspondence between the second- and third-grade students in Room 12 and their second-grade counterparts in a school across town. This account of the genesis unfolding, and fate of Pen Pals attempts to shed light on the social contexts in which the many facets of the correspondence occurred. It also considers the roles played by the children and their teachers in bringing letter-writing to life.

How It Began

Mrs. Leslie is a "writing helping teacher" in the East Eden school district. The term "helping teacher" designates a newly created professional role in the district. Interested teachers apply for the privilege of spending a school year working as resourse persons in the basic skill areas of reading and writing. "Helping teachers" not only aid the continuing education of their colleagues in the district, but their own expertise in these areas is enhanced as well.

As a writing helping teacher, Mrs. Leslie worked with many elementary teachers in the district. Her role afforded her the opportunity and incentive to identify teachers who might otherwise not have been in contact and to initiate the opportunity for their students to become pen pals. Once the initial arrangements were made, the two teachers and their students could carry on the activity without further help from Mrs. Leslie.

For Ms. Donovan's class, Mrs. Leslie identified the second grade of Mr. D (short for "Donizetti," a name the children found difficult to pronounce). Mr. D's class was in the Stone Elementary School. While the Stone and Conley schools were both located on the east side of town and were only about two miles apart, the neighborhoods they served were separated by a four-lane state highway (see Figure 8). Because it was not possible for the children to cross the highway alone, Mrs. Leslie assumed that they were not likely to have already had social contacts with one another. Thus, as they became pen pals, letters would carry the burden of introduction and evolving relationships between them. It was also assumed that, should friendships develop between pen pals, the proximity of the two neighborhoods would make it possible for children to visit one another with the cooperation of their teachers or parents. This arrangement also provided the opportunity for pen pals to encounter one another at church, when neighborhood scout dens met in monthly pack meetings, and in community intermural sports. Later the children would also know one another as students in the same middle school. Before beginning the project, however, only two pen pals knew each other.

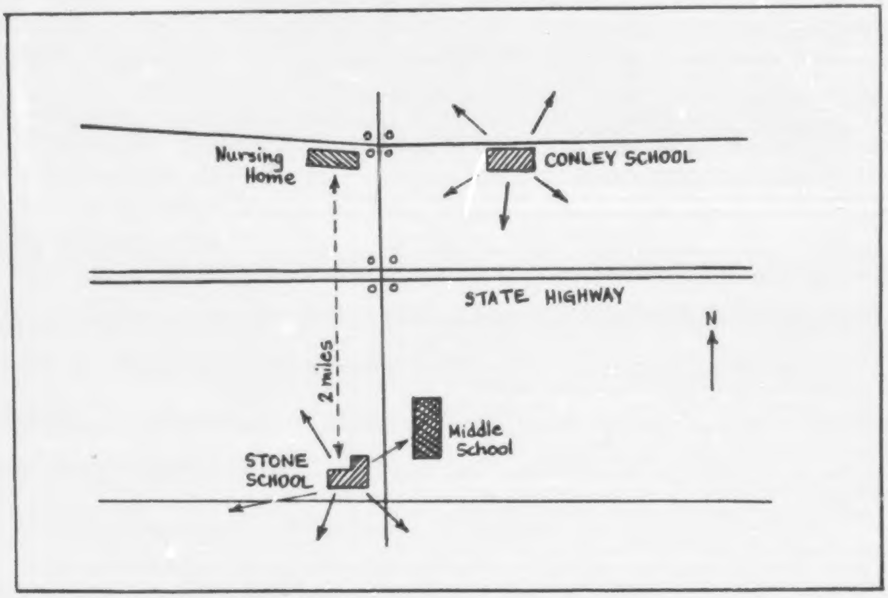


Figure 8. Location of the pen pal schools and their neighborhoods.

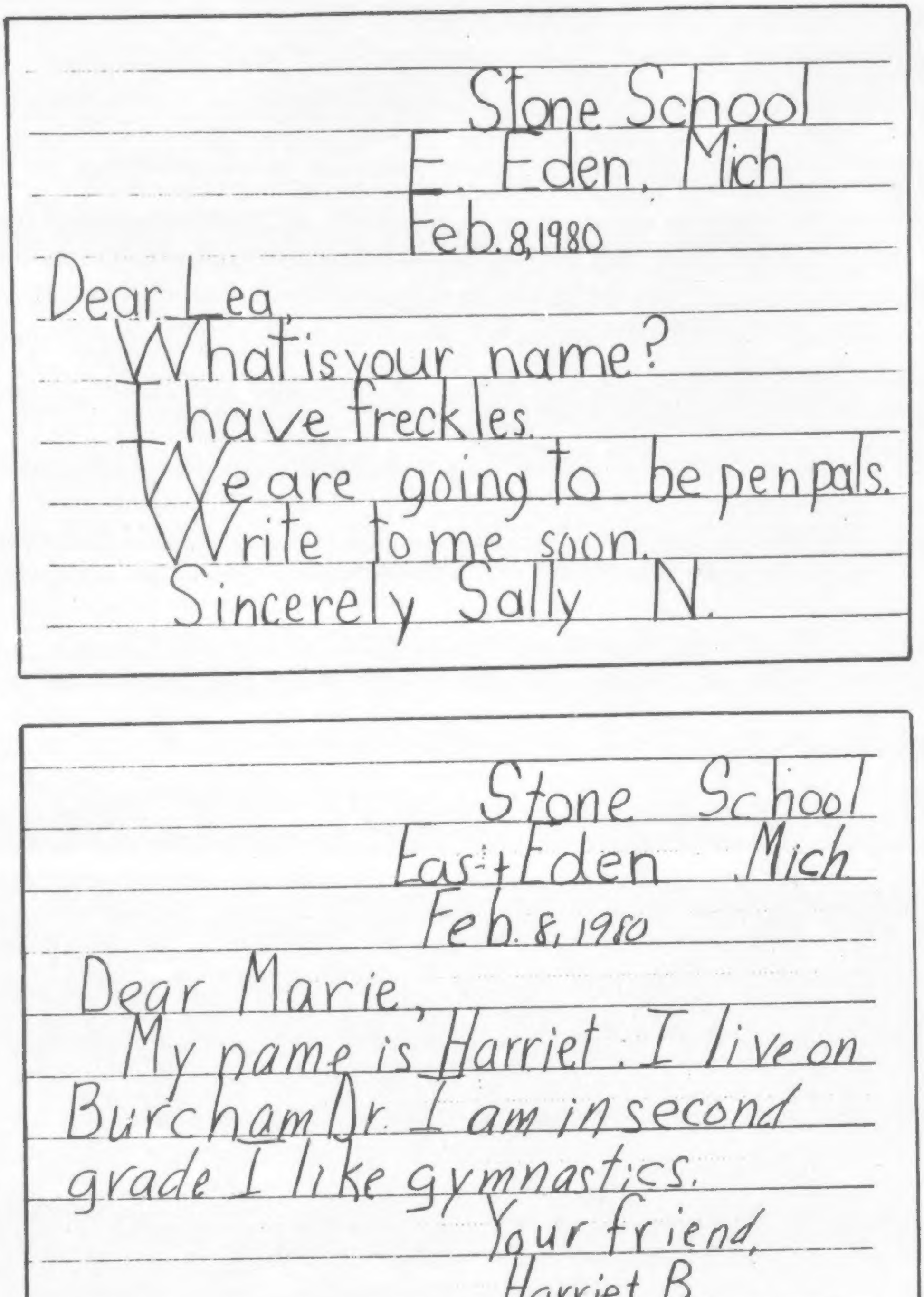
Ms. Donovan and Mr. D assigned pen pals randomly within sex groups. After as many students as possible were paired with same sex pen pals, the remaining few were assigned pen pals of the other sex. Mr. D's students were all second graders, while Ms. Donovan had both second and third graders, but the difference in grade was not commented upon by Ms. Donovan's students when they learned of their pen pals. A more serious difference was the fact that Mr. D's class had fewer boys than did Ms. Donovan's. Ms. Donovan reports the following in her journal:

> We have established pen pals with a second grade class in Stone School. Most of the children were really thrilled with the idea; a few were quite upset. Unfortunately, there were not enough boy's names for all the boys, and you know how deadly girls' germs can be...especially when you mix boys' germs with them. It was difficult to convince them to write. However, most of them are resigned now to the unfairness of life. (Journal, 2/14/80)

This early concern about the sex of their pen pals suggests that from the outset Ms. Donovan's students may have approached the Pen Pals activity as a form of social transaction with Mr. D's students. As we shall see, the problem of sex of the pen pal was resolved by some of the students once the writing was underway.

The students received the names of their pen pals early in February. They corresponded until the end of the school year. The first letters were sent by Mr. D's class. Most of them were descriptions of their authors and were three or four sentences in length. All were printed and included dates, the return address, and the full names of their authors. Figure 9 illustrates with two of the letters.

All of the letters from Mr. D's class arrived by U.S. Mail in a packet addressed to Ms. Donovan. She distributed the letters, and her students wrote replies. In an interview in the last week of February, Ms. Donovan described the process:



Stone School
E. Eden, Mich
Feb. 8, 1980

Dear Lea,
What is your name?
I have freckles.
We are going to be penpals.
Write to me soon.
Sincerely Sally N.

Stone School
East Eden .Mich
Feb. 8, 1980

Dear Marie,
My name is Harriet. I live on Burcham Dr. I am in second grade I like gymnastics.
Your friend,
Harriet B.

Figure 9. The first pen pal letters.

> Ms. Donovan reported that the Pen Pals project is now in its second round. She showed the interviewer letters that her students had written including drawings and school photos of some of the authors. She said that the girls are much more enthused about this project than the boys--Derek is still very put out because he has a *girl* for a pen pal. Ms. Donovan sees the pen pals' letter writing as a good exercise that gives kids lots of practice in basics like punctuation and capitalization. She said that her children are already good at "sentence sense." (Interview Notes, 2/29/80)

In responding to the letters from Mr. D's class, Ms. Donovan's students described themselves in word and picture. However, they found it difficult to expand their letters beyond such descriptions because, while Mr. D's students had described themselves, they had not written anything in their letters explicitly requiring a reply. To help get the transaction started, therefore, Ms. Donovan required that each student include at least one personal question in the letter to her/his pen pal. Most often the question took the form of either a request such as "Will you send me a picture of yourself?" or a question such as "What is your favorite TV show?"

The Pen Pals Meet

While Ms. Donovan and Mr. D had mentioned in passing that someday their students might get together, it was not until Mr. D's class was invited to sing at Colonial House, the nursing home across the street from Conley School (see Figure 8), that the idea became a reality. Mr. D offered to bring his class first to Room 12 where they could present the musical program to their pen pals. Thus, early in March, after having exchanged two letters, the Room 12 pen pals began to prepare for the visit of Mr. D's class.

This preparation was the occasion for quite a bit more planning and writing on the part of Ms. Donovan and her students. She comments in her journal:

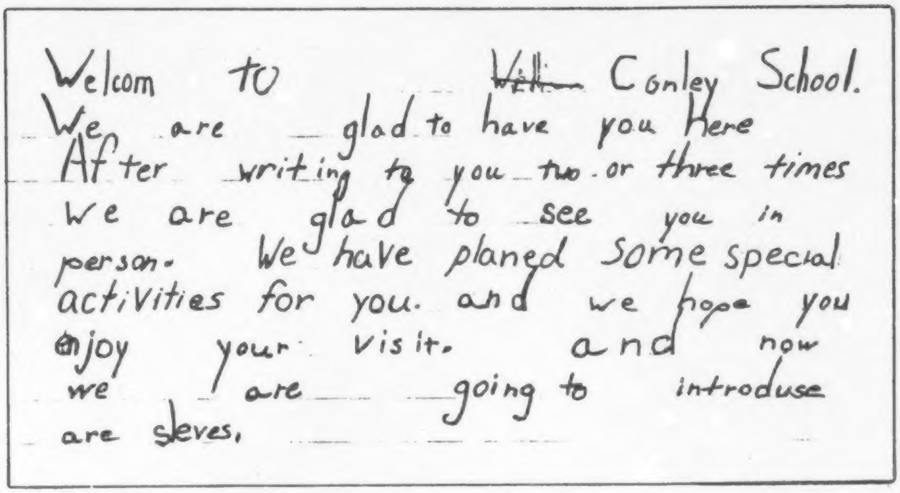
> Our next big planning feat is the visit of our pen pals on Monday. We've sketched out a tentative plan-- I. Introdution, II. Welcome speech, III. Time at different centers at which they'll entertain their pals, and IV. Treats. I initiated the discussion by informing the kids when they were coming and saying it wasn't possible to have lunch for a half day, and what could we do while they were here? They came up with quite a list of ideas but realized we couldn't accomplish all those things with everyone, so someone suggested the idea of centers so each one could choose what they wanted to do with their pal. Tomorrow will be the nitty gritty of detail work. We will have to make the treats, decide where the centers will go and how people will decide where to go and what to do. Interesting..." (Journal, 3/5/80)

On the day that Ms. Donovan and the class planned for the pen pal visit, she wrote on the large white butcher paper she calls "experience paper," recording student suggestions for the activities that could be shared with pen pals at the centers around the room. As activities were suggested and discussed, they were narrowed to "quiet games" that could be played indoors in a crowded room and activities "that only two people can do--you and your pen pal" (Field Notes, 3/8/80). Such planning virtually ensured that each child would have some activity time alone with his or her pen pal. Among the activities suggested were drawing, painting, handwriting, games (chess, checkers, Scrabble, and Battleship), and a tour of Conley School. Time was also set aside for serving a snack that would be prepared in advance by Ms. Donovan's class. After Rice Krispie treats were chosen, Ms. Donovan wrote the recipe on the butcher paper and helped the students to double the recipe so that two classes could be served.

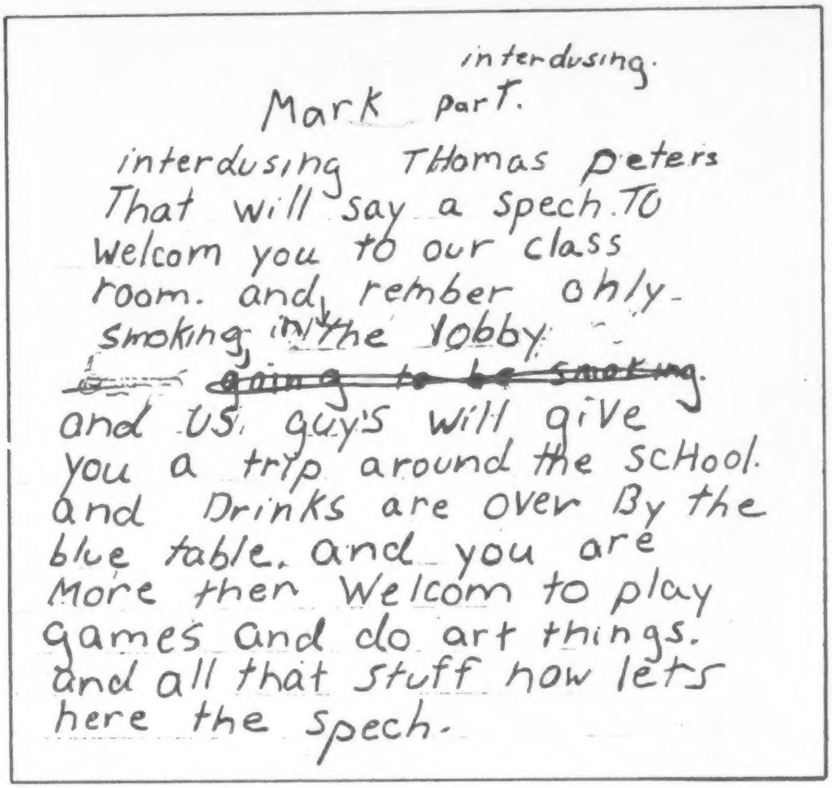
The students also decided that there should be a welcoming speech to greet their pen pals. Mark volunteered to write and deliver it. Meanwhile, Thomas volunteered to write a speech introducing Mark's welcome. Thomas' speech quickly evolved into a spoof. Once written, it was read to Ms. Donovan and the rest of the class to their great enjoyment. Although Thomas' spoof was never delivered to the pen pals, Mark did read his welcoming speech. Both the speech and the spoof are reproduced in Figure 10.

Two days later, the Rice Krispie treats prepared and the centers organized, Mr. D and his class arrived at 12:45. There was an air of excitement as the students made their way to Ms. Donovan's corner of Room 12. The visiting pen pals wore prefabricated shamrock name tags on which Mr. D had written their first names. In contrast, Ms. Donovan's students wore handmade name tags. They had spent a great deal of time during the previous week preparing them, getting very involved drawing on the tags pictures of things that might express a bit about who they were. As a result, many of the students wore tags with flowers, sharks, football helmets, and the like on them. All names were printed or written in cursive by the students (Field Notes, 3/10/80). Here the field notes pick up the story of the visit:

> As each pair of children met and greeted one another, they immediately left the center rug area and went to the round blue table at the back of the room. Then Ms. Donovan's students offered their pen pals animal crackers or the Rice Krispie treats they had made. (This use of food seemed like a terrific ice breaker. It gave the students something



Welcom to ~~Willi~~ Conley School.
We are glad to have you Here
After writing to you two or three times
we are glad to see you in
person. We have planed Some special
activities for you. and we hope you
enjoy your visit. and now
we are going to introduse
are sleves,



interdusing.
Mark part.
interdusing THomas peters
That will say a Spech. TO
Welcom you to our class
room. and rember ohly.
smoking in the lobby.
~~going to be smoking.~~
and US guy's will give
you a trip around the SCHool.
and Drinks are over By the
blue table. and you are
More then Welcom to play
games and do art things.
and all that stuff how lets
here the Spech.

Figure 10. The welcome speech and the spoof.

> to do with their mouths and hands while adjusting to a new social situation. The room resembled a cocktail party for a while.)
>
> By 1:10, some students began gravitating toward two centers that had been set up for the occasion--the art center and the game center. At this time, the principal of Conley School got up to leave. She had been observing the proceedings with apparent pleasure. Also at this time, the school reading aide helped to organize the first of several small group tours of the building. Ms. Donovan and her students knew in advance both who would be in the group of four and who would lead the tour.
>
> Around the room the students interacted with their pen pals--some in small groups, most in dyads. The field worker wandered, not wanting to be too obtrusive and taking her cue from the teachers, who remained peripheral and did not interfere with what was unfolding. Snatches of conversation could be picked up from around the room, such as the following:
>
>> "You don't look the way I thought you would look."
>>
>> "What grade are you in?"
>>
>> "We never get Smelly Stickers" (to one of Ms. Donovan's students showing off the stickers on his notebook).
>> "They aren't Smelly Stickers, they're Scratch 'n' Sniffs. We get them for cursive writing."
>
> At 1:20, Ms. Donovan moved to the center of her corner of Room Twelve and began clapping rhythmically. "In our room that means its time to be quiet, and you have to match the pattern. Let's see if the people in Mr. D's room can match this." She clapped a simple pattern, and they followed. Then Ms. Donovan asked both classes to line up for the music program to be presented by Mr. D's class. After that, she said, they could return to what they were doing. The group was joined in the large common area of Room Twelve by the other Room Twelve students and for most of the remainder of their time together, Mr. D's class performed the songs they had prepared to present at the nursing home, and Ms. Donovan's and the other Room Twelve students listened and joined in singing the songs. (Field Notes, 3/10/80)

Because many of the nursing home residents were sick with the flu, that part of Mr. D's class trip had been cancelled. To the

Challenging issues. In the teaching of writing, we identified a number of issues that our teachers wrestled with explicitly or implicitly. These included the question of audience, the use of models, the need for a sense of purpose in writing occasions, the setting of expectations for writing performance in school, the issue of evaluation of students' written work, and the classroom context as an influence on writing. In sum, these issues and considerations constitute an answer to the question, "Why is writing difficult to teach in school?"

Audience. The description and analysis of the Diary Time occasion for writing demonstrated how important the issue of audience can be in school writing. Audience seemed to be a particularly important factor for the primary grade writers. Ambiguity about audience seemed to cause a variety of responses to Diary Time and made a noticeable contribution to the decline of that occasion for writing. The second and third graders seemed to profit most from real, live, and visible audiences (e.g., kindergarteners and pen pals), while the sixth graders were able to visualize and write for an imaginary audience (e.g., in the Magazine Project). One trend that describes the writing curriculum in the second/third grade as it developed during the year could be called the "widening circle of audience." There, Ms. Donovan started with Diary Time, moved to Safety Posters, which involved other children in the school, and on to Pen Pals, involving an absent but visualizable audience in another school building.

Models. A second issue that our teachers dealt with in each of the occasions for writing was the use of a model. Both teachers expressed mild discomfort with showing an example of a finished product when introducing a new occasion for writing. They were concerned about students imitating a model too slavishly. However, in most cases, our teachers chose to show examples of either their own work or that of students from earlier years who had done similar projects. The teachers seemed to believe that the young writers needed to be able to visualize their finished product in order to get started in the composition process. Indeed, showing an example of a finished product was an integral part of the teachers' communication of their plans. Communication of plans had as much to do with the form and content of the finished product as it did with specifying the process of production.

A second sense in which modeling was an issue had to do with the teachers modeling the process of writing themselves. Ms. Donovan began the school year by writing in her own journal during Diary Time. She continued to use her own writing throughout the year as examples of partial and finished products and also as a way of communicating to her students that the occasions for writing were worthwhile enough for even the teacher to take seriously. Similarly, Mrs. Anderson typically did each student writing assignment herself as part of her own planning and preparation. She later used these drafts and finished work as a means of communication about herself as a writer and as a person. In short, both teachers used the examples of themselves as writers to convey the idea that writing is a valuable, challenging, adult way to express oneself. We can also speculate that writings that the teachers actually performed themselves were likely to be infused with meaning for students.

Purpose. Both of our teachers acknowledged the importance of purpose felt and understood by students as a crucial part of a successful occasion for writing. By purpose, our teachers meant that the activity must have some reason for being done well beyond that of pleasing the teacher. Preferably each writing activity should have some connection with the students' lives in school or beyond. But our two teachers approached the challenge of incorporating real purpose in each occasion for writing in different ways. Ms. Donovan typically developed occasions for writing out of events that already had some meaning in her students' lives. The Safety Posters activity is a good example of her use of the unexpected experience of a school assembly to generate an elaborate occasion for writing. In contrast, Mrs. Anderson tried to achieve purpose in the sixth-grade occasions for writing by providing her students a range of choices of topic and form, within an elaborately pre-planned set of activities. In this way, the sixth graders were encouraged to express and explore their own identities, tastes, and values while at the same time working through an increasingly complex set of literary forms selected by the teacher.

Communicating expectations. In both classrooms, it was clear from the first day of school that every student would be expected to write. Ms. Donovan set aside a full hour of the first day of school for Diary Time. Mrs. Anderson, as a teacher of communication arts, made it clear that writing would receive heavy emphasis during the year. The district testing program in reading, math, and spelling gave the teachers an opportunity to observe their students performing the mechanics of writing. Individual students who had difficulty thinking of what to write (e.g., in their diaries) received help and encouragement from teacher and peers. In short, very early in the school year it was clear to every student that full participation in these classrooms required and included a considerable amount of writing. Although we cannot tell from the data in this study just how important early communication of these expectations was, it was certainly the case that these two teachers strongly believed in the importance of setting high and early expectations for writing performance.

Evaluation. Evaluation of student performance is a thorny issue in every part of the curriculum. In additon to the discomfort that many teachers feel with evaluation in general, writing presents some special problems. Unlike mathematics and reading, there are no clear "right answers" in writing. The adequacy and completeness of a student's written work is a matter of the teacher's subjective judgment. Furthermore, the risk of discouraging a student with a negative evaluation seems high. Ms. Donovan dealt with the problem of evaluating student writing by concentrating almost exclusively on completing the assignment as criterion. The process of doing the writing assignment was seen as an end in itself. Subjective evaluation of the quality of the written product was not made, or at least not reflected in any official grading or evaluation system.

In contrast, most of the sixth-grade occasions for writing were formally evaluated. Typically, Mrs. Anderson announced the criteria that she intended to use in evaluating the quality of written products either during her introduction of an activity or at some time before the projects were complete. In one case (the Magazine Project), she also asked the students to turn in an evaluation of their own work to compare with hers. She was pleased with the degree to which the student self-evaluations corresponded with her own judgments, and felt that the self-evaluations were useful in teaching the students about the difficulty of making fair and careful judgments about written work.

The evaluation issues tends to overshadow a related and challenging problem in the teaching of writing, namely, the problem of providing constructive criticism that will help the student author improve his or her work. In Ms. Donovan's class suggestions for improvement were usually given tutorially, while the work was in progress. Especially during the first months of the school year, most of the critical attention concerned surface features of neatness, spelling, punctuation, and grammar. The concept of a rough draft was introduced during the winter term, but the young writers still seemed to distinguish between their first and final drafts largely on the basis of neatness and correctness. Given that the mechanics of producing a written paragraph or letter were somewhat laborious for seven- and eight-year-old children, the improvement of surface features seems to have been the most one could accomplish in Room 12. In contrast, Mrs. Anderson made extensive comments and suggestions about the form, content, and mode of expression of her students' work. These comments were made on the draft material that the students turned in, and the sixth graders were expected to reflect Mrs. Anderson's suggestions in their final drafts. We have not done an analysis of teacher comments and criticisms of student written work, but we have the distinct impression that the task of coming up with truly constructive criticisms was among the most difficult aspects of the teaching of writing for our two teachers.

Classroom context. Our experiences with school writing in this study convinced us that fostering written literacy in schools is a demanding enterprise. Even when writing was integrated with other school subjects, writing activities demanded a great deal of energy from the teacher to initiate, sustain, and complete. This was especially true in the mixed ability elementary classroom in which the teacher insisted that every student complete every writing activity. In the sixth grade, reading and responding to each student's first and final drafts also placed heavy time and energy demands on the teacher. Finding time in a crowded daily schedule for students to reflect on, think about, and revise what they have written in relatively undistracted peace and quiet was difficult in both settings. The typical public school classroom is not the ideal setting in which to become a writer. We attribute much of the success that Ms. Donovan and Mrs. Anderson achieved in the teaching of writing to their continual shaping of the physical and social environments in their classrooms in ways that supported student writing.

Much of this shaping of the classroom context for writing was done by trial and error and common sense practical reasoning. Psychological theories of composition deal only with the solitary author. Yet, as we have seen in our analyses of occasions for writing, there are large and important social components in the processes of organizing and executing occasions for writing and in the seetings in which the actual writing, revision, and evaluation take place. Individual-oriented theories about the composition process have value, but practitioners also need more adequate models of school writing in social context.

Implications for Further Research

In this report we have described our view of school writing as a complex social, psychological, and practical enterprise and have illustrated the methods we have used to do research on school writing. Our reflections on the data and experiences of this study of two classrooms lead us to recommend three types of studies for future research:

1. descriptive studies of school writing in settings different from those documented here;
2. more focused descriptive, correlational, or experimental studies of specific factors identified in this study as important elements in school writing; and
3. inquiry into ways of relating research on written literacy (its processes and findings) to the practice of teaching.

The first suggestion for future research is a call for more thick description of children's writing in context. Before the field can put together the beginnings of a developmental picture of the

the acquisition of written literacy, we need to document the teaching and learning of writing at grade levels other than second, third, and sixth. Other potentially important setting differences include bilingual classes, inner city schools, and special teacher training and background (e.g., the Bay Area Writing Project or one of its progeny). Furthermore, future descriptive research should attempt to observe and describe those events and experiences outside the school, at home and in the neighborhood and community, that provide opportunities for children to learn, practice, and apply writing as a means and as an end in itself.

Several of the factors identified in the present study as important in the teaching and learning of writing deserve more focused attention. These include the role of audience, the use of process and product models in writing assignments, the influence of teachers' conceptions of the writing process on their planning and teaching, form and timing of constructive criticism of students' written work, motivation for writing, and the setting of expectations for writing performance. We are reasonably convinced that these factors are important to successful school writing. Understanding precisely how and why they are important will have to await additional descriptive, correlational, or experimental research.

Our final suggestion for future study concerns the process of relating research to practice. By and large, the research on teaching of the last 15 years has not had dramatic effects on the practice of teaching. In part, this is because accumulating research findings is a slow and deliberate business, while the demands of the classroom do not wait patiently for researchers to come up with precise answers to precise questions. Furthermore, much of research on teaching addresses questions that are of little practical interest to practitioners.

But even when research on teaching is timely and addresses questons of real interest to practicing teachers, the problem of putting research into practice is not solved. Because every classroom situation is unique, a list of prescriptions for teaching will miss the mark more often than not, or be couched in such general terms as to constitute a set of mere slogans. Furthermore, teachers are thinking professionals and not mere technicians. They deserve and need to have a sense of ownership over what, why, and how they teach. Both the processes of inquiry and the findings of research on teaching must be subjected to careful deliberation by all interested parties in order to ground recommendations for the practice of teaching in the wisdom and experience of practitioners.

In the context of applying research on the teaching of writing we have proposed the creation of a Written Literacy Forum. The purpose of this Forum is to build on our research on written literacy in schools and on our experiences in meaningful collaboration with practicing teachers to create a new and powerful way to bring research into practice. Specifically, we will organize a Written Literacy Forum comprised of researchers, practicing teachers, and teacher educators (a working group of about 12 people). Forum participants will develop and try out answers to the question, "What does research on writing mean for teachers and teacher educators?"

Forum members will have access to a rich corpus of descriptive data on the teaching and learning of writing in schools. Consultants with special expertise will be called on from time to time. Pairs or small groups of Forum members will identify issues of particular interest to them and pursue these issues, producing analytic papers, syntheses of knowledge about some aspect of written literacy, and materials useful in teacher training and development. Deliberation within the Written Literacy Forum will be documented and carefully described. In short, the Written Literacy Forum will be a serious attempt to think from research on writing in order to interpret and adapt the research in ways truly likely to make a difference in schools. Documentation of the development of the Written Literacy Forum may also produce a model for relating research to practice that can be adapted for use by other researcher-practitioner teams.

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APPENDIX A

DISSEMINATION

Dissemination

During the period of this grant the research staff has engaged in a number of dissemination activities. In addition to this technical report to NIE, the journal articles, book chapters, and other papers listed below have been produced during the course of this project. These reports focus on particular substantive and methodological issues surrounding the teaching and study of writing. Beyond these formal papers and publications we have conducted a number of colloquia at our own and other universities, in-service teacher workshops in local school districts, and consultant visits with the State of Michigan Department of Education and with researchers and practitioners interested in research on teaching.

Written Literacy Study Reports and Publications

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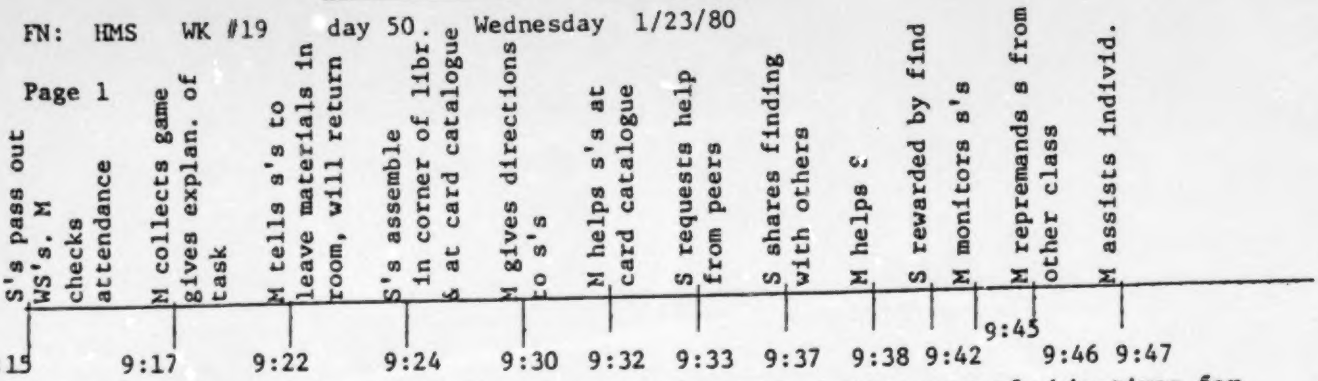
APPENDIX B

SAMPLE FIELDNOTES

Fieldnotes - Grade 6

FN: HMS WK #19 day 50. Wednesday 1/23/80

Page 1


S's pass out WS's. M checks attendance
M collects game gives explan. of task
M tells s's to leave materials in room, will return
S's assemble in corner of libr. & at card catalogue
M gives directions to s's
M helps s's at card catalogue
S requests help from peers
S shares finding with others
M helps s
S rewarded by find
M monitors s's
M repremands s from other class
M assists individ.
:15
9:17
9:22
9:24
9:30
9:32
9:33
9:37
9:38
9:42
9:45
9:46
9:47

MN: Requested bank of objectives from M. Obtained student copy of objectives for 2nd quarter. Large bank of objectives from first quarter M will bring to me another time.

ON: 9:15 Three girls pass out worksheets:
Titles of WS's are
1. Calling all numbers
2. Guiding readers
3. It's in the cards

M checks to see if s's are present, asks in general if any s's are absent. M asks s's if they all have all three worksheets, reads off titles.

9:17 M collects battery powered game (calculator type) from Robbie. She asks him two or more times before he finally hands it to her.
M tells s's that she will give them a very quick explanation, tells them that for #1 (on WS) that s's will need to go to where tree branches are in library (M points in general direction--SE) to find where fictional books end and non fiction begins., tells s's they will have to find the different sections (M is standing in front center of room.)
M tells s's that they will have to write the call number, name of author and title of book they select. M tells s's that they all can't start there at once.

ON: 9:20 Mtells s's that for #2 on WS, they can locate cards in card catalogue, all books listed are there, she has checked herself. M explains that s/s are to write on WS's and where they are to write.

ON: 9:22 M tells s's that on last sheet, they will do the same thing but for a different book, e.g., non fiction for subject card. Main information will be needed, such as name of author. . ., M tells s's to leave notebooks and stuff here. We'll return at the end of the hour.'

ON: 9:23 S's and M leave room.

MN: Room is rearranged, especially in front. Tables pushed back (same general arrangement) but lecturn and table and o.p. are west of center front. (I think for the purpose of student presentation of oral reports.)

ON: 9:24 S's gather in SE corner of library, (about ten s's) where fiction ends and non-fiction begins. About four girls are at the card catalogue. Other s's are scattered.

ON: 9:25 M walks to SE corner, tells s's that they don't all have to be in one place.
9:26 Four g's at card catalogue.
9:27 Most s's in SW corner (12 or more) but spread out at various table.

MN: Gary asks me for help. I point to the call number categories above bookcases.

FN: HMS WK #19 day 50 Wednesday 1/23/80 jm

Page 2

9:50	S's work together
9:51	M tells s's to return to room
9:53	B's talk about basketball. M ask for attn.
9:54	S asks other s's to be quiet
9:55	M asks s's to put name on papers
9:56	M tells s's they may leave room
2:10	M reviews what s's did last week, explains new assignment
2:14	M & W confer
2:15	S asks? noise level higher
2:17	S begin work W makes suggestion for place of work
2:20	Sm.gr. disc. 1 gr. makes drawing-share ideas
2:26	Noise level rises

ON: 9:30 M tells s's to reshelve books after using them.
9:32 Eight s's at card catalog. M assists them.
9:33 Teri: "Now what do we hafta check? (to s's ar 400 section).
M tells s's in SE corner that all of them don't have to copy the same book.
9:34 M joins Teri's table.
9:35 Some s's very quietly writing (about 5). Scott jumps to touch top of bookcase. . . .struts, pencil over ear.
9:37 Craig shares his finding (book) with two girls.
9:38 Christie appraches M. M responds: 'You'll have to hunt--right on top of it' (laughs).

MN: 9:42 Teri approaces me excitedly. Says she found two new books to read: One about the KKK, and the other about Black Beauty (not the horse).

ON: 9:45 M contimues to circulate among groups of s's. (S's appear to work individually on task).

ON: 9:46 Richard, are you finished?
Richard: "We're done"
M: (discovers that he is in W's class)"You should be with your group."

MN: I move to card catalogue area. Cannot seem to find a place where everyone can be observed at once--too many barriers (e.g., bookcases).

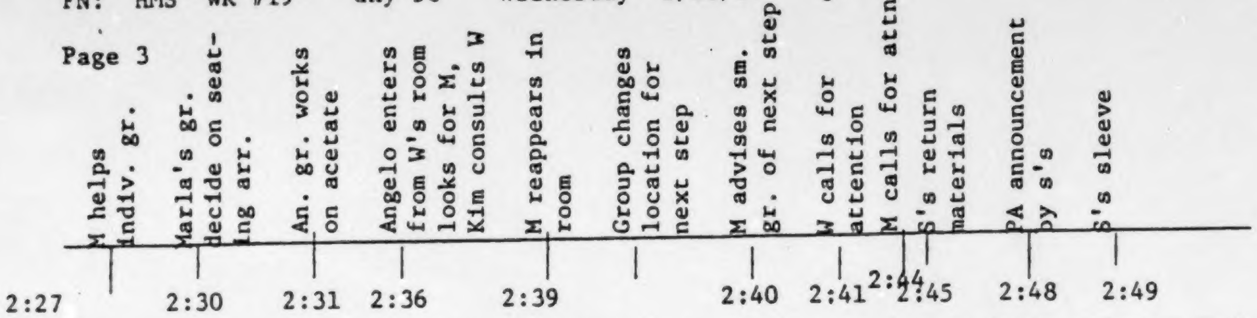
ON: 9:47 Fourteen s's in card catalogue area. M assists indivduals s's. S's have card drawers pulled out. Some are kneeling, standing, sitting.
9:50 Tom: (responds to?) "I coulda guessed" (keeps drawer open).
Three girls run together toward table near card catalogue, one with drawer in hand. (all appear to be excited).

ON: 9:51 M tells s's to put drawers back in proper order, return to room for a few minutes.
9:52 M: "Come on, . . .No tardy slips for special area."
9:53 (In classroom) three or more boys talk noisily about basketball. M enters says "all right, shh". . . asks s's to be seated.
9:54 Seven s's still standing.
S: "Be quiet!" (loudly).
Gary shares his WS with M, says "I only got this far." (Shows his WS to her about 3/4 completed).
9:55 M: (to s's) "I forgot to tell you to put your name on all three papers."
M asks s's if any of them have finished all three sheets. Two s's raise hands.
M tells s's that on Friday they will have a little bit of time to finish up. She tells them to keep their papers in their notebooks, not to lose them, says that those who have finished may look around the library.
9:56 M tells s's that they may go. S's leave room.

MN: At end of the morning, M comments to me on how much I have written. I get the impression that she is happy when I have much to write about.

FN: HMS WK #19 day 50 Wednesday 1/23/80 jm

Page 3


M helps indiv. gr.
Marla's gr. decide on seating arr.
An. gr. works on acetate
Angelo enters from W's room looks for M, Kim consults W
M reappears in room
Group changes location for next step
M advises sm. gr. of next step
W calls for attention
M calls for attn.
S's return materials
PA announcement by s's
S's sleeve
2:27
2:30
2:31
2:36
2:39
2:40
2:41
2:44
2:45
2:48
2:49

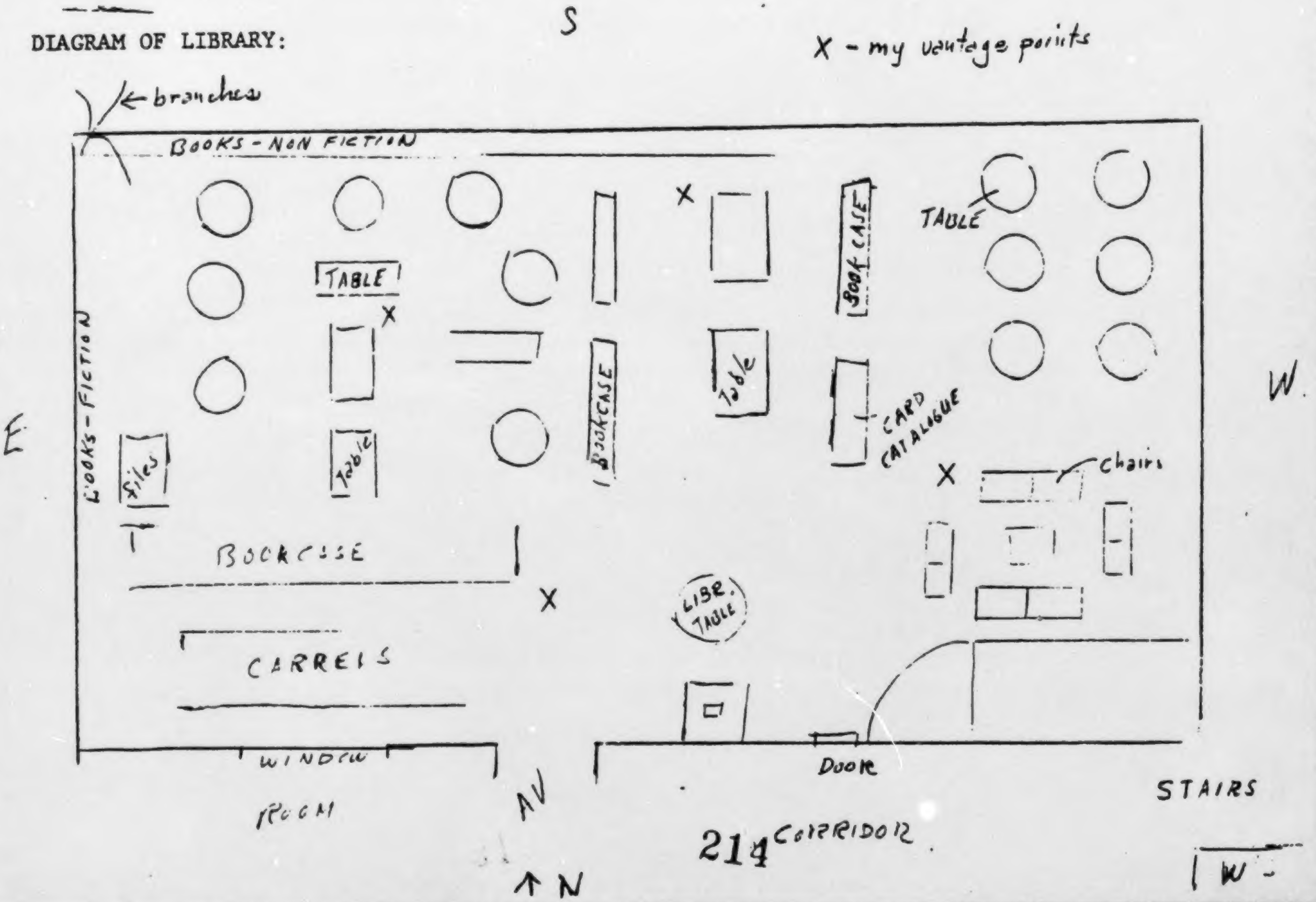
MN: M tells me that the purpose of this activity is to have s's be able to work on research paper, so that s's won't be afraid to look for ____ books. First time that I can recall that M has explicitly referred to purpose of lesson. I wonder if she picked up the idea that I would be specifically interested in "purpose" from interviews with R.

MN: M reminds me that today s's will have classroom meeting. I had temporarily forgotten about it but can change my plan for the day and return this afternoon.

MN: Requested samples of worksheets s's complete at future date from J. (possible Friday or Monday).

MN: M tells me that she will introduce the Reader's Guide (Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. and Wednesday at 2:10 p.m.).

DIAGRAM OF LIBRARY:


S
X - my vantage points
branches
BOOKS - NON FICTION
TABLE
TABLE
BOOK CASE
BOOKCASE
Table
CARD CATALOGUE
chairs
BOOKS - FICTION
files
Table
BOOKCASE
LIBR. TABLE
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STAIRS
AV ROOM
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Florio-1
10-12-79

Field Notes--Classroom Participant Observation

TN/ ON: Today is *Columbus* Day. It is also the day after JD has been out sick. To open the day, the s's meet on the floor in the center. They talk briefly about what they did yesterday. Also, to begin the day, s's are treated to a holiday play performed by the 5th graders. There is an apparent impromptu decision on JD's part to turn the occasion into an opportunity to write--perhaps made when it is apparent that, due to the play, there will not be enough time to start reading groups before gym.

ON: At the board, the following schedule is written:

Today is Oct. 12, 1979

9:20--10:05
play
reading

10:05--10:30
Gym

10:30--11:00
Reading

11:00--11:15
Recess

11:15--11:30
USR

11:30--12;10
Math

12:15--12:50
Lunch

12:55--1:55
Speaker
Language Arts

2:00--2:15
Recess

2:20--3:05
Superstars
Diaries

3:05--3:15
Clean up

ON: After the play, the group remains on the floor in the center and has a discussion about exploration of The New World. The discussion occurs from 9:30--9:45.

ON: At 9:45, JD says, "So what can we write about this man (Christopher Columbus)? Anything we've learned?" Each time an s offers something, JD says, "Can you put that in a sentence?"

ON: JD copies down on large white paper in front of the s's the sentences they offer--

> "I leaned about the different kinds of islands that Christopher Columbus went to." (JD asks the s that has offered this sentence if he can read it back. He does.)

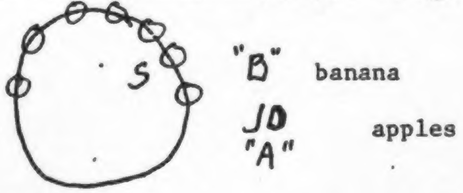
written in red

JD: "And Mike, what did you learn?"
Mi: "Noting-"
JD: "You just learned the same things that you already know?"
Mi: "Yes."

JD calls on other s's. Finally one offers something learned.
(in purple) "He died before he got to Asia."
JD: "Cha, did you learn anything new?"
Cha: "We learned it last year."
Another s offers: (in blue) "He was first to America."

ON: S's sent back to seats to work in their folders after Columbus discussion.

ON: At 10:52, JD says, "Let's get into a circle, please." (They put folders away and join circle in center.)
JD: "We're gonna go on a trip. . . pretend we're going on Christopher Columbus' ship. And we're gonna take different things on a trip."



JD: "I'm gonna take apples."
S: "I'm gonna take apples and a banana.etc."

("Apples, banana, cans of food, ducks, elephant, fawn, glue, hippopotamus, ice cubes, junk, kangaroo, lion, monkey" are named. At that point, JD says, "It sounds like we are on Noah's Arc almost. . . instead of on Columbus' ship." Then an s adds, "nuts." At that point the group stops for gym and JD says they'll finish when they return.

TN: Some of the cognitively demanding aspects of this task involve the following simultaneously memory, knowledge of the vocabulary, control of initial vowels and consonants/spelling, turn-taking, knowledge of classes of objects.

ON: During gym, JD talks to me about the work in gifted education of Rensuli. She talks about her own education stopping short of calling herself gifted. "I only know that I was very bored in school; stuck off in a corner with a book to read." In the midst of this conversation, JD says that she thinks that one boy, ER, did not want to play the game because he was afraid he wouldn' be able to do it (I don't know whether JD would consider him to be "gifted" by Rensuli's or her own definition.)

ON: After gym, the game continues. Tom, the boy who offered "duck" is now gone from the group, and I observe taht the first s misses "duck."
TN: Could association of words and students also be operating in this game?

ON: Words that are added include "octopus, pig, queen, rhinoserous, snake, tomatoes," The last sutdent in the circle has the letter S since there are fewer than 26 students. But she says "zebra." JD: "You don't have Z; you have S." After her turn, they go around again with JD having a turn. They stop at T.

ON: At 10:35, the s's are in their seats. The "passer" has given out 2nd and 3rd grade paper. The s's are to copy the Columbus sentences. There is a high level of ambient noise. JD says, "Sssh" often. She is at the horseshoe table correcting some worksheets with one s. She has some of the perenial "disrupters" (Chri, Ti) at the table with her.

ON: I am distracted by the principal and several 4/5 girls and boys who are having a heated discussion at a table in the center of room 12. They are discussing an altercation about which all are apparently angry. GM raises her voice periodically--as do the s's.

ON: The s's in JD's room talk and move a lot. They appear restless. JD continues to say, "Ssh." There is a great deal of gum chewing today. Also, I observe that all s's are wearing pants, and most are wearing jeans. This has not been typical so far this year. There is a lot of leaning across desks and bickering ("Move over. I can't see!")

TN: I wonder whence the air of informality and restlessness. Is it because

--it is Friday? (and gum day)
--it is the day after JD has been absent and, according to JD, the substitute "couldn't handle" the room 12 arrangement? (JD says she "still can't figure out what she did.")
--there have been several consecutive days of bad weather?
--reading was interrupted by gym?
--there was a disruption of the regular reading format today because of the play? (No reading groups today.)

ON: During this time, Der and Ant (who are identified by JD as "gifted") are doing science work at Ant's desk. They do not have reading with the other 2/3 students. Early this morning JD had shown me the paper rocket they had made for a play they are planning to write and produce. (TN: Integration of science, writing and other language arts?)

ON: By 10:50, many s's are walking around the room. JD says, "I hear a lot of rudeness. Where do you belong now?" But at 10:55, Li asks me (apparently not knowing the answer to JD's question), "Susan, what do we do after we're done doing that on there?" (copying sentences). I also do not know. Some of the things s's are doing at this time include

--talking
--quarreling (several instances of tattling on each other)
--Fern is drawing a picture of her grandfather, but few other s's have elected to draw or write on their own.

ON: At 10:59, JD says, "I'd like you to close your folders and come and sit in the center. "The s's are asked to put their finished papers "in the bucket." Others are to leave their work on their desks. JD says that s's whose work is not finished may not go out for recess. JD must repeat several times, "I'd like you in a circle." She says, "I don't like how you people make a circle, " and calls many individual names.

JD: "When I ask you to sit down, Carl, what should you do?" etc.
JD: "Monday, what are we going to have to practice?"
S: "Listening to directions."
S: "Being quiet."

ON: At 11:01, there is a break for recess. During recess and USR, I peruse literature that JD obtained yesterday at gifted workshop (reason for her absence). She raises the topic again. Talks about it with enthusiasm.

ON: At 11:35, there is a transition to math. S's are in the center. JD has a stack of workbooks. She says, "Will you raise your hand and tell me what you did yesterday?" There is some dispute and confusions among the s's about what was done. JD says that she will go over p.8 with the s's "together," and then "you can go back to the other pages." She calls the s's by name and gives them workbooks. They find seats.

ON: During this process, there is high ambient noise. There are disputes about who is in whose seats. S's say
"I'm tellin?"
"That's my chair!"
JD still can be heard calling a lot of individual names both to reprimand and to praise s's behavior.
"Leila remembered to open to p. 8."
"Karen. . ." (falling intonation)
"I'm still waiting for Mark's table. They're very rude.

ON: The assignment on p. 8 involves "number sentences." Given the following "incomplete number sentence," the problem is to decide "what sign goes in the box to make the number sentence true."

$$52 + 71 \qquad\qquad 83 + 71$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 52 \\ +71 \\ \hline 123 \end{array} \qquad \text{What sign} \qquad \begin{array}{r} 83 \\ +71 \\ \hline 154 \end{array}$$

JD: "Can you think of a way to tell without putting the answer down?"

TN: This task makes many assumptions about symbolization as well as about computation and mathematical reasoning.

ON: As the group begins to work on the problem, JD says, "We're going to have to stop again. There's an awful lot of rudeness going on. . . talking to yourselves. You're very impolite."

ON: S's offer strategies for completing the sentence. In addition to the one of adding the numbers and comparing the sums, Jeff . . .That "both 71's are the same. Look at 83 and 52 and decide which one is bigger." JD: "Either way is alright to do." She does not do the entire p.8 with the class (although she said earlier that she would), but does two sentences. The assignment is written on the board--

S.B [student book]
8 [page]
4, 5, 6, 7, [problems]
Then 9 [page]

ON: After JD makes the assignment, she says "If anyone needs scrap paper (presumably for calculations), I'll put some up on the chair." This is the first time I have observed the use of scrap paper (and the writing functions attendant to it) officially designated by JD.

TN: This is an instance of writing that is done 'privately' and to 'work something out.' But both the process and its documentation are not saved or shown to the teacher. They are discarded. Only the outcome, represented symbolically, is saved, shown, and evaluated (presumably the teacher makes inferences about the process based on the nature of the outcome, however.) Some of the scrap paper that is officially designated as such is the backs of old dittoed worksheets. I have also seen s's write on the backs of such worksheets--before writing in the "answers" on the front because they claimed that they didn't want to "cross out" on the worksheets.

ON: At. 12:10, there is clean up before lunch. JD says, "This morning what trouble did we have in math time?" S's: "Too noisy." JD: "On Monday, I'm going to give you seats that I want you to stay in. You're being too silly."

ON: At lunch, JD and I talk about the troubles that seem to have been occasioned by there being a substitute teacher yesterday. JD muses, "I wonder if she's different with the kids than I am. I'm unusual." She elaborates, pointing out that she tends to be positive, she doesn't "single out" students for reprimands, and she doesn't raise her voice. Then she adds, "Its just like you said about community. If someone comes in and changes the rules, what do you do?"

ON: After lunch there is a guest speaker from the fire department. He visits each classroom and gives a short presentation.

MN: It is interesting to note that, in the schedule, JD has combined the speaker with language arts time and deleted science. One could imagine the opposite also making sense in terms of curriculum. One possible explanation is simply that language arts normally occurs in the middle of the day and it is simpler to delete science than to drop language arts and move science. But another way to think about this decision is in terms of what JD construes as the range of activities appropriately engaged in during the time called "Language Arts."

ON: At 12:55, after lunch, JD calls s's to the center. Roll is taken and the "afternoon plans" are read. JD explains about the fact that it is Fire Prevention Mont. When JD mentions this occasion, s's suggest that the other "special" days or events coming up include Colombus Day (today) and Halloween. They also say that "it is getting colder" (maybe associating a string of important holidays with fall/winter).

ON: When JD's class is joined by another class not from room 12 (who enter with a substitute teacher) and Dz's class. JD using clapping cadence that I have heretofore heard only the principal use (at the school-wide Safety Assembly) to gain the attention of the group. She explains to the newcomers to room 12 (who come from a self-contained classroom and who presumably were not so informed by their substitute teacher),"You have to be very quiet because there are people on the other side of the room."

TN/ ON: A period of waiting for the fireman ensues. He is apparently delayed. There is some 'stalling' during which time s's fidget and noise increases. In what is apparently a sort of "vamping til ready," Dz then leads the group in some songs. First is a rendition of "My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean" done as a "Columbus Day song in which the words have been changed to tell about Columbus' voyage. Then they sing a song called "Peanut Butter and Jelly" which is very rhythmic and dramatic and which the s's appear to enjoy.

ON: At 1:15, the fireman enters accompanied by the principal. He sets up his slide show which is called, "Sparky's Friends Learn Not to Burn." The s's watch the show and then are dismissed to their respective rooms after a brief discussion.

ON: At 1:45, JD gathers her s's in a circle on the floor. They talk about problems from yesterday. Then at 1:52, Li interjects, "Are we gonna do language arts?" JD: We don't have time to do it today." But she adds that there is something the s's can do over the weekend to get ready for the next language arts time. They are to find leaves of all sizes and bring them to school--"as many as you can." Then, at 1:55, JD quizzes s's from a checklist about fire prevention left by the fireman.

ON: Next room 12 has "Superstars." There are not many given by the 2/3's--two per homeroom. There is much reference to behavior problems of the past week as the reason.

ON: At 2:45, having returned from the center of room 12 and "Superstars," JD puts a chair in the center. The s's take seats on the floor around it. JD says it is time for "Show and Tell," although on the board the time has been scheduled for "Superstars" and diaries.

ON: Ani tells that, "I'm going to Detroit tomorrow. Any questions?" There are none. Then Manal (it is not her day) asks JD if she may show the class her book. JD says, "You can show it, but you can't read it." Manal declines.

ON: Then the group returns to the book Ka has been reading orally. They are near the end of it. S's are free to sit and listen or to return to their seats.

ON: At 2:52, after Ka has finished the book, JD asks, "who wants to share their diary with the class?" Dani identifies herself, and JD says, "She just wants to share part of it before its time to write in your diaries." As Dani reads, about 2/3 of class are quiet and looking at her, appearing to listen intently.

At the end, JD says, "Were some of the things she wrote about real? Can you write about make believe things in your diaries?" S's: "Yes."

ON: JD asks s's to sit and take out their diaries. She says she'll "come around" if they raise their hands. The only s's I observe not doing this activity are Der, Ant, and Er. They are working on props for their science play. The room is relatively quiet. Li asks me to spell a word, but in a definite whisper. Some s's are making new diaries. Several girls are working on a chain letter that has been circulating among JD and Dz's students. Mana has made an autograph book and asks me to sign it.

Dismissal

Florio-1
10/25/79

Summary of Notes from Dinner Meeting
General Observation(s)

Chris Clark initiated the conversation this evening with a question about "getting started" in the school year in general, and in the instruction of writing in particular. The teachers engaged in a lively conversation of more than an hour, and the researchers did not interject comments or questions very often. It is worthy of note that, left free to determine the course of the conversation, the teachers did not limit themselves to the issue of "getting started," nor did they address solely the 'direct instruction' of writing (language arts, communication arts activities), but talked about writing as it manifests itself in a range of classroom activities. I think in light of these two bits of evidence it is important to ask ourselves just how salient the idea of 'getting started' is to the teachers- it may be more interesting to the analysts than to the participants. Also, I think we have begun to accumulate strong evidence (in the interviews, in the field notes, and now in the dinner conversation) that these teachers do not think of writing and its instruction as solely the province of language arts class, but think of it both as a skill that is taught directly at some time(s) in the school day and as one that is used and can be taught about within a variety of academic contexts.

Three Major Themes

What follows is highly inferential and is basically an attempt to summarize and synthesize a conversation that covered a lot of ground. However, upon examination of my notes, I think it is possible to talk about the conversation in terms of three interrelated themes. The first, "getting started," was generated by us, and the teachers had no option but to deal with it. As I said above, I am not at all convinced that it is an issue that is salient to all of them. This bears testing by means of careful review of already collected field notes, interview responses, and journal entries. However, what is very interesting is the way in which the teachers chose to respond to the issue of 'getting started,' and the subsequent, related areas that they explored. I think these areas were ones not thought of in advance by the researchers, but they were ones upon which the entire informant group seized with alacrity despite the differences in grade level taught, educational philosophy, and personal style. For convenience, I have called these two themes "the landscape of the writing task" and "the question of a standard." These terms, like "getting started," are creations of the analyst that need to be supported as valid representations of the teachers' thinking by evidence from our data set.

"Getting Started"

The four teachers rose to the task of discussing "getting started" quickly and spoke with ease about it. This is, I think, a strong piece of evidence that the category is one that they have and have a language for. They did not, however, stay with the question for more than the first ten minutes of the conversation. And so I wonder whether it is one that sufficiently pre-occupies them to be considered functionally relevant in developing a grounded description of their thinking about writing instruction. Putting that analytic question aside, however, my notes suggested that there was quick consensus that writing is different from other subject areas covered in school, and that these differences have implications for both the ways in which one starts writing in the school year and for the role writing plays in the starting of school. The follow four points were made by individuals and appeared to be ratified by the group in this regard:

(1) Writing is one school activity that can be started early in the school year because (in our educational system) it is one of the few areas in which one does not have to pre-test and match children to materials by ability level. (It strikes me as I write this that this may be one very positive thing about what some have lamented as our inability properly to 'assess' writing competence and our lack of systematic writing materials and curricula. One might imagine what would happen to writing if, like reading, it because more heavily structured and evaluated. And, in like manner, one might imagine the look of reading instruction in school if it did not have to wait upon testing, the computerized test results arriving in the mail, and the grouping of students by 'ability.');

(2) There is 'no right or wrong;' writing is something you can always say something good about to the student. Related to this comment was the consenus that writing is not particularly competitive whereas other subjects in which there are clear right and wrong answers and measures of progress tend to foster competition among students;

(3) Because writing can be combined with other kinds of symbolization to express an idea, it can be used to "ease them into" school again and so is a useful early vehicle for academic activity;

(4) Writing is a good way to mark or make note of shared, whole-class activity. (Although not stated explicitly here by the teachers, this comment suggests that writing early in the year may support the establishment of classroom community in ways that other academic activities do not.) Worthy of note here is the fact that teacher(s) mentioned not only the writing by each member of a class about a shared experience, but the enthusiasm students have for reading each other's work.

"The Landscape of the Writing Task"

Unlike the question of "getting started," in which a fair degree of consensus seemed to obtain between middle and elementary school teachers, when the conversation evolved to a consideration of aspects of the writing task that are foregrounded for teacher attention and to the actual appearance of the writing task, differences began to arise. The primary teachers talked most about the problems of and strategies for motivating and supporting the writing task. Furthermore, the writing tasks they described were short in duration (one day, one part of one day) and did not involve editing and revising either independently or in response to teacher comments. In contrast, the middle school teachers seemed to address more the shaping of a piece of writing by means of a longer term assignment (one week) and revision based on self correction and teacher comments.

One common concern of the teachers was the difficulty of inferring mastery of factual content from answers written by students. Although the problem manifests itself differently at the elementary and middle school levels, all expressed a kind of frustration with programs like SCIIS and DMP that rely on student writing as a major way to demonstrate academic competence. The upper grade teachers found that the problem centers around students' diffucuclties with the techniques of writing while the lower grade teachers said that it was difficult for students to separate 'fact' from 'fantasy,' and therefore they had difficulty reporting the facts in their lab booklets and workbooks. (Wayne addressed this problem when he talked about writing descriptively about what one sees under a microscope--about the problem of criteria for adequate description being different when you were attempting to represent acurately rather than expressively what you had seen--this can also be a problem in writing up descriptive research!)

"The Question of a Standard"

This question was raised by Daisy. A lively discussion ensued in which the issues of modeling, criteria for adequacy of student written products, and the implicit expectations of the Common Writings Curriculum were raised. In large part, the question concerned the relative advantages and disadvantages of giving students a model of the written product you expect in advance of their actually beginning to write. There seemed to be a general tension between the desire, on one hand, not to constrain students' 'creativity' (a position that Wayne suggested was much more prevalent a few years ago--perhaps when at least half of the group was trained) and a sense of responsibility for and valuing of sharing the socially held conventions about writing. There was general agreement, however, that the goal was linking these two areas of commitment in the experience of the student writer. Daisy, as the newcomer in the system, raised the question of lack of explicit criteria for adequacy within the Common Writings Curriculum in terms of the teachers' responsibilities to their students. She appeared to raise it, not as a rhetorical question, but as one to which she expected the veteran teachers to have an answer or at least considerable insight. However, the other teachers did not have an answer to the question, leading me to think that the general perception of the group is that this area is vague in the curriculum. However, the teachers did express some of their values and beliefs about what some criteria for adequate writing might be. These beliefs fell along one continuum that might be labeled, using Jo Ann's terms, as follows:

Skill ____ Creativity

Where a person fell along this continuum appeared to be related, at least in part, to the age group taught. I think that the teachers in the upper grades talked in most detail about specific skills, strategies for teaching them, and their importance in shaping the landscape of the writing task. On the other hand, the teachers of the lower grades emphasized the immediacy of the writing experience, the need for vivid personal experience to initiate and sustain writing. This kind of concern appeared to leave little place for revision of writing. (It may be that, for beginners, so much of the writing act is new--from formation of the letters to symbolization of thoughts and feelings--that short, vivid, straightforward writing tasks make the most pedagogical sense. Later, when a good bit of the writing act is routinized, it may make more sense to stretch the act out over several days and several re-writings and to turn one's attention to the fine points of sentence construction and to the attendant nuances of expression.) Finally, where one might fall along the above continuum could be related to some of the following values that the teachers mentioned holding:

--mastery of technical skills (journalism)

--genre knowledge (what is a poem)

--ability to respond to dictates of specific tasks (descriptive writing)

--ability to reflect upon and articulate for others feelings and procedural knowledge (writing directions, writing questions, writing about feelings)

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE INTERVIEW NOTES

October 3: Interview with Marilyn (Grade 6)

Marilyn and I began our session with a discussion of our teaching career goals. Marilyn is looking into to possibility of dropping her name from the union membership. (E. L. is a closed shop so it's a decision based on a principle, not on money.) Marilyn is planning on retiring in 2 years. She is not tired of teaching but would like to have time for some other things too. She said she is tired of taking papers home every night to grade. She smiled and said she was really enjoying this (meaning the project).

I think Marilyn finds that our work and interest adds to her enjoyment of teaching. Talking over what she does and thinks with adults adds an interesting dimension.

I asked Marilyn if she had followed her plans for writing or if she had changed them as she actually presented and taught them. She answered that she had. She had the students construct graphs this week. Something she always does. But before she had asked them to write a synopsis at the bottom of the drawing of the material presented in the graph. As she was standing at the overhead she said to herself "Gee, thats' dumb!", and on the spot changed the writing requirement to having the students compose and write four questions that they think other students could answer after reading their graph. She is planning on putting the graphs up around the room and giving the students an opportunity to see if they can answer the questions on each others' graphs. Marilyn went on to say that she doesn't always think of these things as writing activities. In fact, had thought Sister June wouldn't be interested because she wasn't doing writing.

Even when she had the students write their tall tales she said she did not think of that so much of a writing assignment as it was a sharing and getting to know you experience. Marilyn thought the students had a lot of fun with the tall tale assignment. She told them that they didn't have to share if they didn't want to.

This was the assignment where they wrote why they hadn't done their homework-trying to convince a teacher the reasons were legitimate.

The writing assignment for this week, or theme as Marilyn calls it, is to write about something old from the family-something they treasure. She used to have them think of an antique but with so many students coming from split homes and/or living in apartments they may not have antiques, but the object has to be at least as old as they are. One student, a girl, handed one in today about a crib, but Marilyn handed it back to her as it did not have enough detail. She asks students: "Who was the original owner? Have you always had it? Or did you get it in a garage sale? Is it functional or just pretty to look at? Was it once functional but not now? One girl wrote about a spinning wheel. How would you feel if it were lost? Or stolen?" They are working on this assignment all week. It is due Thursday; they always are. One girl wrote about some needlepoint that her grandparent had brought over from Hungry.

I asked Marilyn what kind of things she would be looking for when evaluating this assignment: Sentence structure, run on's and variety in sentences. Spelling; how they use their rough drafts. It has to be stapled to the final copy.

Here Marilyn referred to something she heard at a workshop that she attended last year. The difference between revision and proofreading. She tells students to proofread but wants them to revise also. I suggested she might use the term editing also.

b

October 3: Interview with Marilyn

page 2 (R. Maxwell)

Neatness counts of course. I asked if she would grade them. Marilyn will write comments on them and then keep them in the students' folders. She keeps the writing assignments in the folder to look at them when she does report cards.

Although Marilyn said she keeps all writing assignments in the folder, it is just the themes.

She also did a skill lesson this week on capitalization from Building Better English. It was on capitalizing proper nouns and they discussed the difference between common and proper nouns. Because street was used as an example in the book, Marilyn asked students what words could you use besides street (lane, avenue, circle, etc.) so students would know to capitalize these words too. Marilyn said most have had this in elementary school, but they need to know so a review is good.

C. M. Clark

NOTES ON NOVEMBER 2, 1979 INTERVIEW WITH J.D. (Grade 2/3)

The first part of the interview concerned J.D.'s response to my questions in her journal about what changes J.D. has noticed in her students' writing since the beginning of the school year. She said that the most noticible changes took place among the "low" kids. She mentioned that G. had said at the beginning of the year that he could not write or dictate stories. Now, he seeks out J.D. to have her write down his stories. Another boy, E., is asking for fewer words to be spelled by J.D. when he writes his story. With the low kids, the reading aide, N.B., is being very helpful by having three low boys dictate experience stories several times a week.

Changes in the writing of the other students in the class since the beginning of the year are that they write longer and more elaborate stories. For example, one page was not enough for some students who wrote "pumpkin stories" last week. One of the posted stories on the bulletin board required a "double pumpkin." J.D. also judged that the children were more fluent in their story writing, compared to the beginning of the year. J.D. also pointed out that the second graders' handwriting samples were getting spontaneously more elaborate, with the use of more adverbs and adjectives than at the beginning of the year.

Now that J.D. has gotten her students to a reasonable degree of competence in story writing with positive attitudes about their competence, she wants to begin a new stage in the writing process: proof reading.

T.N.: It seems that J.D.'s implicit model of the writing process may be unfolding here. First, get the kids to do (and therefore believe that they can do) a lot of short, highly motivated, art-related writing activities. Then, as stories get longer and more elaborate, and kids become more fluent (benchmarks? vital signs?), shift the emphasis from creation of stories to reflecting on what has been produced, attentions to detail, even self-criticism and self-improvement. These changes represent a whole new psychological orientation for the students.

J.D. also talked about the importance of audience in the students' writing, mainly as a source of motiviation. A related source of motiviation is having the kids produce a concrete visable product (e.g., a class book, posters, etc.). She said that "if there is no audience or other real reason for writing, it just doesn't work." To illustrate the importance of producing concrete products and having an audience, J.D. told two stories. In the first, a student (Man.) had been absent for a day or two during which the class wrote short stories and put together a class book. Upon her return the absent student asked the teacher if she could write a short story on her own time to be added to the class book. The concrete product was there, and the student wanted to be a part of it. Second story had to do with the importance of audience. When J.D. announced that the class was to make Halloween safety posters, the children grumbled and booed, and indicated that they were not enthused about this project. But when J.D. said that they were to share these posters with first graders and kindergarten children, the students reversed themselves and were instantly enthusiastic about the project.

J.D. mentioned that her students had produced a play, Billy Goats Gruff, and that it had gone very well. She said that the children had worked on the play for a period of two weeks, which is a long time to sustain attention for children of this age. She pointed out that when a lesson or activity must be extended over more than one class period or day that she must do a lot of reteaching, i.e., she can't just pick up where we left off. J.D. attributes this to the relatively short attention spans of children of this age, and anticipates that this will be one of the challanges of teaching them proof reading.

November 2, 1979 Interview with J.D.

In other writing activities J.D. reported that her third grade students are still quite enthused about learning cursive writing. She also said that she hasn't been able to get them writing in their diaries much lately, bacause of schedule problems, but some of the children continue to write in their diaries anyway. The problem with scheduling has to do with science and social studies periods sometimes running overtime, therefore not allowing sufficient time at the end of the day for diary writing and clean-up. J.D. said that she's thinking of changing diary time to the middle of the day, because things are too rushed at the end. She still thinks that it is worth scheduling a regular diary writing time.

J.D. talked a bit about her own writing. She said that the more writing that she does, the easier it becomes for her. She gave an example of writing a letter home to parents describing a field trip for all of the room 12 students. She said that she hates to do this kind of writing because it is very difficult to get it just right, but that she volunteered to do it so that she will get better at writing of this kind. She now has a file of examples of letters home to parents that have worked in the past, and she draws upon these. In talking about the field trip, J.D. noted how nice it is to have several adults to share the work of room 12. For the field trip, one teacher did all the calling and arranging, J.D. wrote the letters home to parents, and other teachers took other parts in the organization. She said that it really helps to spread the work around. In addition to the four regular classroom teachers, J.D. mentioned the reading helping teacher, the reading aide, plus having plenty of physical space to move around in as being special benefits of working in this setting.

I asked J.D. about her use of the Common Writings Curriculum. She said that she looks at it every couple of weeks, but that most of the requirements for second and third graders are things that already happen without special planning in her classroom (e.g., copying from the board, writing different types of sentences, etc.). In addition, J.D. pointed out that some activities that are not in the curriculum are things that her students need practice in (e.g., learning how to answer questions in science workbooks). She said that sometimes, if she runs low on ideas, she looks at the common writings curriculum to see what it might have to offer.

T.N.: It seems that the common writings curriculum is perceived as a relatively unstructured and minimal collection of activities. In a classroom like this one, in which a relatively large amount of writing takes place, the common writings curriculum activities are things that take place naturally, without special reference to that curriculum. J.D.'s task seems to be to express what she is already teaching in terms of the common writings curriculum rather than to organize her teaching according to that curriculum.

One last set of comments from J.D. was that "this year is so easy. I don't have to deal with all the problem children that I had last year. Some children still have problems, but I can still appeal to their sense of reason. Last year I had a very difficult child who brought out the worst in everyone."

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE TEACHER JOURNAL ENTRIES

beginning of second month /

Teacher Journal - Grade 6

Wed., Oct. 31 - Most of the students did a nice job of writing several ¶'s to describe a place last week. This week they are writing a description of a person and the ones I have seen seem equally as good.

On Monday I read the students a description I had written (actually I guess I read two) and, again, that seemed helpful to many of them. In my selections I illustrated how they might have their characters involved in doing something and then describe the characters' actions & expressions while involved in the activity. I sincerely believe that it is a disservice to our students not to present the student with a model. As a math teacher tells students "how" something is done ~~via~~ by using a problem (model), English teachers should use the same technique. I think this gives many of the kids a better "sense of direction" and this confidence in turn results in better writing.

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On Tuesday during soc. stu. I re-introduced question writing. (Many students had had difficulty several weeks ago when asked to write questions regarding graphs' they had constructed.) After reading several pages in the text, I asked them to write two questions based on the reading that others should be able to answer. We talked about "factual" questions vs. "thought" questions - and also "open book" questions. Students took turns reading questions + called on others to answer - then we discussed both the questions + their answers.

Since today was Halloween, I provided time for those who wanted to to read their "place descriptions" aloud. (Since many of them were spooky places it seemed appropriate!) The response was positive. I also read some without revealing names for the hesitant ones.

This a.m. there was also a work period where I could help students with this week's written work. I wish I could find a way to do this more often.

Week 7 for 3 - The themes that I've read which describe a person are very interesting - and quite clear. The problem I'm having now is that about 1/3 of the students do not get their writing assignments in on time. - it's not always the same people - only 3 or 4 of them are chronically late.

Because report cards need to be filled out next week, I've not had the students turn in a theme. Instead, I'm going to be doing some skill lessons on writing conversation correctly so that the next week they can write a story in which they describe a place + characters + have the characters speak. They will be asked to think carefully about the story as it will be incorporated into a magazine they will be writing later.

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Teacher Journal - Grade 2/3

4/23/80

Language Arts this week had to be replanned due to National Secretaries Week - we made cards for Marilyn, some children wrote poems, and others made a banner. They had a variety of ideas and could choose which activity they wanted to complete. Some chose two. Everyone loves the secretary - they instinctively know what will happen without her - CHAOS

Planning for Science has become a management problem. There is no way to distribibute daphnias (water fleas) to 28 children quickly and orderly - they are simply too excited watching the little creatures. We have to work on self-control - waiting to hear all the directions and not letting the excitement of the situation take over.

4/27/80

Marilyn enjoyed all her surprises. It does help to have an audience. One of the girls made a typewriter-shaped card - 3-D. it was quite the hit and at least 3 people copied it.

Plans are being reshaped this week by a Social Studies unit Daisy is doing on Japan. So far its been quite interesting - we

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APPENDIX E

SAMPLE VIDEOTAPE LOG

11/6/79
Tape 2
Gr. 6

Videotape - Continuous Catalogue (Grade 6)

Counter #	Participant(s)	Activity
271	T&CLASS	Discussion of magazines T moving around in front of room - showing magazines SS beginning to react to magazine T showing She is talking about body builder
312	T&S	One boy asks to see the picture - T shows it to him
314	T	T shows magazine she did in contrast to last class she actually shows pages of the magazine Much less SS reaction [illegible]
327	T&CLASS	Girl has hand up -T does not acknowledge Begins showing another old S's magazine
336	S	Girl put hand down - T has glanced at her but not acknowledged
344	T&CLASS	T finishes showing magazines still in front but close to class; T "Okay, first of all what you need to do, pauses, says disruptive boy's name then goes on. Certainly hasn't been much class participation so far and it appears t is preventing what does occur.
345	T&CLASS	SS quiet and watching T who is showing beautiful women's magazine explaining it is mainly for girls, not boys, SS react
348	T&S	As T is talking B makes excessive noise, T says his name and continues
349	T&S	T, "Just think what kind of magazine you want to write" Teri shoots up her hand, T: Now just think, I'm not answering questions yet. T talking to this girl but looking at class and has moved further to left center front of room G put hand down
355	T&CLASS	T continues talking without leaving this time to think she has talked about and asks, "What are special topics magazines might have?" Several SS raise their hands, G who has not been acknowledged does not T calls on others
360	T&CLASS	Boy responds "sports", Others moaning, and making noise B directly in front of T slams hand, ouching, etc. he and desk mate watching camera. T says what would be another topic,

Videotape - Continuous Catalogue

11/6/79
Tape 2
Gr. 6

Counter #	Participant(s)	Activity
514	T&CLASS	T: Okay, you all need paper and a pencil SS get up to get paper, etc., lot of movement
520	T&S	T talking to one SS
527	T&SS	B (#362) up to talk to T then he leaves the room, other SS including G attempt to leave but T stops, sends back. T goes into hall closes door
540	T&S	Returns to overhead and hold up object for boy to come to retreive
545	S	G comes in walks to table, T notices, No comment
550	T&CLASS	T next to overhead, Begins lesson T "All right - how many of you remember how to write conversation in elementary school."
557	T&S	B's comes up while T talking - she stops gives him a pencil
560	T&S	G walks up interrupts T - then leaves room
562	T&CLASS	T still trying to talk about quotations T next to overhead
564	T&CLASS	T instructing on quotation using overhead and walking forward closer to class
567	T&CLASS	Asking SS for alternative ways to write, says T moves to class away from overhead, moves back
592	T&CLASS	T tells SS was giving to dictate questions but S last hour suggested she show them on overhead so she is going to do that
597	T&CLASS	SS's are to look at sentence, copy it, put in all puncuation marks T walking into middle of class 1st time than back to front and to far left
603	T&S	Talks to individual S

APPENDIX F

VIEWING SESSION FORMAT

INTRODUCTION TO VIEWING SESSION

April 17, 1980

Preview

We would like you to look at this part of the tape which shows when you first started talking about the magazine. We are interested in the tape because it seems to contain a lot of information. We think the magazine is interesting because so many kinds of writing activities led into it and followed from it. It is one of the longer assignments of the year, and the students seemed to enjoy it.

First we'd like you to--

1. Watch the tape with Jan straight through without stopping;
2. Share any first impressions or general comments at the end;
3. Then Rhoda and S. June will join us, and we will watch the tape together.

Viewing Session

4. This time as you watch the tape--
   - a. Comment on what you see in the tape;
   - b. Focus your comments on the whole group;
   - c. We are especially interested in what you are doing and saying in your teaching and what the class members are doing and saying as you begin the magazine.

We'd like you to comment right along with the tape as you watch it. Don't worry about interrupting the tape. Activity goes by quickly on videotape, so if there are times when you want to comment in detail, just stop the tape or ask us to stop it so we can talk.

At the end of the viewing session, ask Marilyn if there is anything she wants to add and/or if there is anything she wants to say about the viewing session.

Schedule the next viewing session.